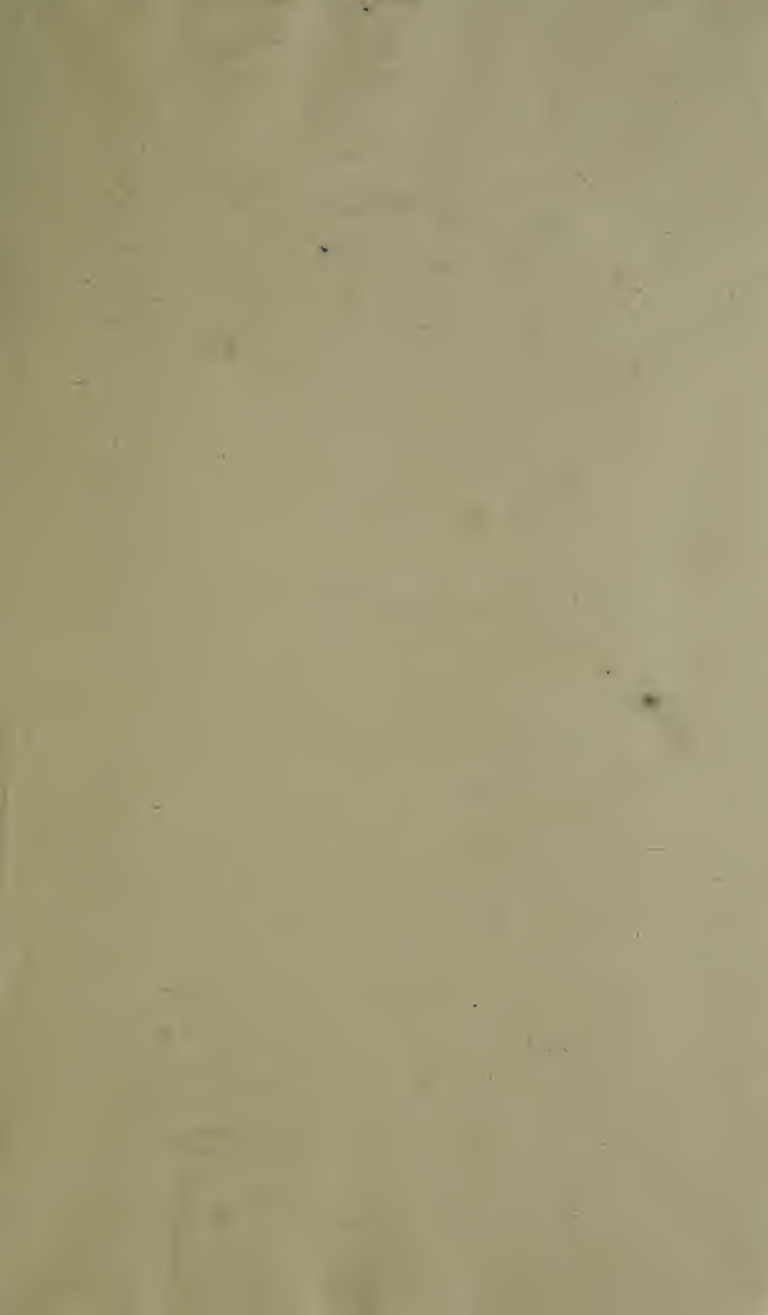




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THE INQUISITOR;

OR,

THE STRUGGLE IN FERRARA.



THE INQUISITOR

OR,

THE STRUGGLE IN FERRARA.

An Historical Romance.

BY

W. GILBERT,

AUTHOR OF "SHIRLEY HALL ASYLUM," "DOCTOR AUSTIN'S GUEST,"
"DE PROFUNDIS," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE INQUISITOR;

OR,

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CHAPTER I.

THE PRISONER.

BOUT noon the day following the religious procession, the arrest of Teresa, and the arrival of the Judge at the house of the blind widow, the Signori della Sanita, the podesta, and the syndaco, with his substitute, assembled in one of the rooms in the Palace of Justice, to receive the reports from the Lazaretto and the different wards of the city, relative to the progress of the plague.

To their great satisfaction, these reports were of the most favourable descrip-

tion, only one fresh case having been sent to the Lazaretto from the suburbs, and no information having been received of any in the city. The question was now entertained whether it would be advisable for the Becca-morti to go the round of the city, and it was at length determined it would be better for them to remain on the island, holding themselves in readiness to cross over should intelligence be received of any fresh case occurring. By adopting this arrangement it was considered the alarm always occasioned by the passage of the cart through the city would be avoided. In the meantime, notice of the favourable change in the distemper was forwarded to the Duke, at Belriguardo, to the Archbishop and principal personages in the city, and notices were placed on the walls of the Palace of Justice and the church doors.

When the Signori della Sanita had completed their duties, they left the Palace of

Justice with the podesta, and the syndaco and his substitute, before whom Teresa had been brought the previous day, descended into the room in which the preliminary examinations of accused persons were conducted, to hear the reports on the condition of the prison, and to decide on the future disposal of the prisoners. On the head warder making his appearance, he stated that the prison was so full, that if an outbreak of the plague took place among those confined within its walls, the results might be of the most lamentable description. The syndaco then looked over the list of prisoners to ascertain if any could be discharged, or drafted off to other prisons. Unfortunately their number was few, as most of those confined were incarcerated on charges of heresy, or of harbouring heretics. This, however, was occasioned more by the reward offered by the Inquisition for their apprehension, than from any very ardent wish of the in-

THE INQUISITOR.

habitants of Ferrara to injure their Protestant brethren.

A number of individuals and spies finding they could now not only do an action acceptable to the Church by denouncing Protestants, but at the same time receive a pecuniary reward, had exerted themselves so energetically, that the authorities found great difficulty in disposing of the number of prisoners who had been brought before them. The Holy Office stimulated into unusual exertion by Oriz, had employed themselves with great energy, and contrived by every means in their own power, and by influencing the parochial priesthood, to keep alive the agitation. Although the seat of the Inquisition was established in the Dominican monastery, the business of the Holy Office was conducted in a long building at the rear, having a prison beneath it. This, however, was far from being large enough for all those unfor-

tunate Protestants who had been arrested since the arrival of Oriz, and the prison in the Palace of Justice was then brought into requisition and soon filled. Daily some of the prisoners were sent to the Dominican convent for examination, and those who recanted, either under the torture or from dread of it (and, unfortunately, they were many), were discharged, but their void was rapidly filled up with fresh persons accused of the same offence. Those who remained determined to hold by the faith, were returned to their original prison, either to await a fresh examination, or to submit to the punishment awarded them.

On going over the list of prisoners who had been admitted the previous day, the syndaco came to a blank in the names, and he asked his substitute for an explanation. He received for reply, that a young girl had been arrested on a double charge of breaking the sanitary regu-

lations, and of heresy. She had been accused, in the first place, of having visited the Lazaretto with a plague-stricken friend, and afterwards entering the city. The second charge was for omitting to make the sign of the cross when the crucifix passed her in procession, and refusing to kneel to the relic of St. Agatha.

“As she appeared a very inoffensive girl,” he continued, “I tried all I could to persuade her to admit that she meant no disrespect, that, in fact, she was not aware that the crucifix and the relic were passing at the time, as I wished for an excuse to discharge her, but she refused to make the admission, and I had no alternative left me. Thinking a little solitary confinement might perhaps bring her to a better frame of mind, I sent her into one of the cells, where she now is.”

“What is her name?” said the syndaco.

“That is the worst feature in her case,” said the substitute. “I could not obtain from her either her name or address. I wish you would see her, perhaps she might tell you. From what I can judge, there is very little harm about her.”

The syndaco now ordered the warder to bring the prisoner before him, and a few minutes afterwards he returned in company with Teresa.

There was at first sight little appearance of rebellion or obstinacy about the poor girl; on the contrary, she appeared overwhelmed with sorrow.

“My substitute tells me,” the syndaco said, in a kind tone of voice, “that yesterday, when brought before him, charged with two serious offences, you refused to tell him your name and address. I hope you will not refuse them to me this morning. I say it for your own welfare, as I wish to befriend you if I pos-

sibly can. Now, tell me what is your name."

"Indeed, I cannot. I dare not," said Teresa, the tears pouring down her face as she spoke. *

"Dare not!" said the syndaco. "Of what are you afraid? Be assured the law is strong enough to protect you from any person who may attempt to injure you. Now be reasonable, and tell me your name."

"Indeed, I cannot," said the poor girl. "If I alone were concerned I would tell you willingly, but——"

Here she stopped short, as if recollecting herself. The syndaco noticing her embarrassment, said to her—

"Go on, you have far more to fear from your silence than honestly telling the truth."

Still Teresa remained silent; and the syndaco continued, "Once more, speak out, my child, and I will befriend you if I can."

“Indeed, I cannot,” said Teresa. “Oh! don’t ask me.”

“By persisting in your refusal,” said the syndaco, “are you aware of the means you are obliging me to resort to?”

Teresa looked at him with intense terror, for she anticipated but too easily what he was about to say.

“The only means I now have left me to obtain your answer is to subject you to the torture of the cord. Warder,” he continued, “tell the executioner to see that it is in readiness.”

The warder was about to leave the room, when Teresa, in the extremity of terror, caught his arm to retain him.

“Oh! do not put me to the torture!” she exclaimed. “You cannot be so cruel!”

“Then tell me your name.”

In a moment the danger her father would be in if she obeyed the syndaco flashed across her mind and gave her courage.

“Do with me what you please,” she said, changing her tone to one of great resolution, “I will not tell you my name.”

The syndaco, looking at her with great interest, said to the warder, “Take her to the torture room, and show her the cord and pulley, and explain to her how it is used. Then take her back to her cell. I hope to-morrow,” he continued, addressing Teresa, “I shall find you more reasonable, for I can assure you it would grieve me to hurt you. Now go, and remember what I have said, and the punishment you are likely to bring upon yourself if you continue obstinate.”

The warder having led Teresa from the room, the syndaco said to his substitute—

“I should be sorry to employ force in obtaining the name of that young girl, but there is a certain amount of mystery about the affair which ought to be explained.

That there can be but little harm in her I admit; still, if we discover who she is, it may lead to matters more important."

"She certainly must have strong reasons for concealing her name with so much determination. Again, there is little difficulty in detecting from her language, manner, and dress, that her position in life is far above the average of our prisoners. At least till lately, for the energetic action now taken by the Holy Office has sent us prisoners of a far higher grade in society than we have been accustomed hitherto to meet with."

"I shall not be sorry," said the syndaco, "when the Holy Office finds it advisable to relax their efforts. Catholic as I am, and I hope a true son of the Church, it goes sadly against me to find among our prisoners those who have hitherto enjoyed—and deservedly too—the respect and esteem of their fellow-citizens, and with several of whom I have been on terms of

personal friendship. But to return to this young girl, what are we to do with her? Obtain her name we must, to send on our list to the Holy Office."

"Possibly the sight of the cord and pulley, and the explanation of their use by the warder, may induce her to change her mind," said the substitute.

"That it very often does I admit," said the syndaco, "but it will not do so in her case. Keenly as she is alive to the pain the cord would give her, and fearfully as she would suffer from it were it applied, be assured that pain will not extort her secret from her. And Heaven forbid that I should be the cause of making her by such means!" he continued. "Still we must take steps to prove, if necessary, to the Holy Office that we have not been indifferent to their orders. What would you advise me to do?"

"Let us send some one to the Lazaretto and inquire the name of her friend, and by

that means we may be able indirectly to discover her own."

"Do so," said the syndaco. "If the plague is really subsiding, there will be no occasion to punish her for a breach of the sanatory laws. And if we can only obtain her name to enter on our book, and an admission from her that she intended no disrespect to the relic of St. Agatha, which may serve as an excuse for me, I will immediately release her."

The substitute now sent a messenger to the Lazaretto, who did not return for several hours afterwards. Not that he had employed himself during the whole of the time on the mission on which he was sent, for, on the contrary, he could obtain no information. The surgeon who had admitted Madonna Ponte was not in the Lazaretto, and the head physician could not remember the name of the patient who had been accompanied by the young girl. It is more than probable that this was

merely an evasion on his part, as he could easily have obtained the information by referring to the list of patients. Possibly Dr. Boschi's objection might have arisen from the authoritative tone of the messenger when he demanded the information, as if the head physician were legally bound to give it, while the latter, on the contrary, resolutely maintained his superior jurisdiction, without interference from any other authority, in all matters connected with the Lazaretto, or the Boschetti Islands. Another subject also had occupied his attention at the moment. A dispute had arisen the day before among the Becca-morti, which had been followed by a circumstance calling for the immediate exercise of his authority in the management of the Boschetto.

When, the afternoon before, Carlo Pedretti, after having insisted on the municipal officer arresting Teresa on a charge of breach of the sanatory laws, returned to his

companions at the cart, they received him with great indignation, telling him he was a miserable spy, and that it was a disgrace for them to have him in their body. Pedretti, on his part, retorted, with great animation, and a violent dispute arose between him and an old man about his own age, causing great amusement to the bystanders. Gerolamo, whose disgust at the behaviour of Carlo Pedretti was perhaps greater than any of his companions, saw the necessity of his, as chief among them, maintaining discipline, and he insisted on their conducting themselves in a more quiet manner, reserving their dispute, if they pleased, till after their duties were over, and they had arrived at the Boschetto. Then ringing his bell violently, he marched gravely onwards, the others following him. No sick or dead were brought out, and they continued their round till evening, when they returned to their quarters in the Lazaretto.

Here the dispute among the Becca-morti again broke out, and they insisted that Carlo Pedretti should no longer remain one of their body. The dispute was at length put an end to by a message reaching them that Pedretti, for the future, was to remain in the Lazaretto to assist in the removal of the bodies of those who died of the distemper, and to make himself otherwise useful among the sick on the male side. For the moment Carlo received the news with great satisfaction, but the next morning he had reason to change his opinion. In consequence of reports which had reached the Lazaretto that no cases had occurred during the night, Carlo's companions remained on the island in a state of comparative ease, while he was obliged to continue his new duties. To add to his trouble, he had been placed under the immediate authority of one of the barbers employed in the Lazaretto, and to whom Carlo was indebted certain

soldi for services rendered him by the said barber, comprising among other things the extraction of a tooth and a bleeding. In vain had the barber applied to Carlo for payment of his debt. At first Carlo met him with excuses, attributing the cause of his non-payment to loss of employment and the hardness of the times, all of which the barber allowed to hold good for a time. One day, however, when he again applied for the discharge of his debt, he received in reply that his debtor did not possess a soldo in the world, and maintained so energetically and despairingly, that he did not know where he should get his next meal, that the good-natured barber, after grumbling prodigiously, at last supplied him with it. The barber afterwards found to his great disgust, that Carlo had that morning received two golden ducats from his son-in-law who lived in Urbino, and that he had not even changed them when he detailed his deplorable condition to his creditor. The

barber, however, was helpless on the subject. True, he could have placed him in a debtor's prison; but then he should have had to make an allowance to the gaoler while Carlo was in prison, which would soon have amounted to more than the original claim. So he wrote the amount off as a bad debt, contenting himself with a volley of abuse at Carlo whenever he met him.

Pedretti now found that the anger of the barber had far from subsided by the lapse of time, and by way of revenging himself he gave his debtor, who, as before stated, had been placed under his orders, an amount of duty to perform which he found exceedingly irksome. The result was that Pedretti insisted on again joining the body of the Becca-morti, whom he found had at the moment nothing to do. This by no means coincided with the views of the barber on the subject of discipline, and he threatened Carlo with personal chastisement

if he did not perform the duties which he had assigned to him. Carlo, however, set him at defiance, and being of a light and spare figure, while the barber was heavy and corpulent, he ran from him out of the Lazaretto and joined the Becca-morti, who were quietly stretched on the banks of the river having nothing to do, and warming themselves in the sun.

No sooner did Carlo join them than they all with one accord rose from the ground, and abusing him soundly, asked him what he meant by intruding on their society from which he had already been expelled. In vain did he plead again to take his place with them, but they were inexorable, and on the point of driving him from them, when they heard the barber, who had left the Lazaretto, calling to them to bring Pedretti to him. They required no better occupation, and in a few moments afterwards Carlo found himself in the grasp of the barber, who, holding him fast with one

hand, belaboured him with the other with such good-will that he roared for mercy, and so loudly that the sound reached the ears of Dr. Boschi, who being a strict disciplinarian, immediately inquired into the cause of the tumult, and ordered all persons connected with it to be brought before him. The barber attempted to explain the rebellious behaviour of Carlo, but he was so out of breath by the exertion he had undergone, that he was hardly able to make himself intelligible, while Carlo, with the blood streaming down his face, told the physician so pitiable a tale of the fearful brutality he had received at the hands of his superior, that he was not only exculpated from all blame, but appointed to another part of the establishment, and his assailant received a severe reprimand for what the physician termed his brutality to a poor inoffensive old man.

In the part of the Lazaretto to which Carlo was now assigned Madonna Ponte

had been placed. That morning she had expired, and one of the first duties Carlo had to perform was to assist in removing her remains from the building to the cemetery. The poor lady had gradually sunk, and was attended with great care at the time of her death by a sister of charity. In the evening of the same day a notice of her death was inserted after her name by the chief physician in the list of patients admitted into the Lazaretto.

CHAPTER II.

CARLO PEDRETTI'S LAST APPEARANCE.

DURING the next week not more than two cases of the plague were brought under the notice of the Signori della Sanita. In fact it might almost be said that the pestilence had subsided as suddenly as it had begun, no unfrequent characteristic of the disease in its visits to Ferrara. Although this subsidence might very possibly be traced in this and in other instances to the admirable sanitary regulations adopted by the municipality, the Inquisition found in it too powerful an agent in their cause to allow it to disappear without leaving a strong lesson behind it. They endeavoured

now more strenuously than before to prove, by the sudden disappearance of the malady, that the anger of heaven was abating, pacified by the exertion shown by the inhabitants of the city in putting a stop to the heresy which had lately so infected it. They made the few cases of the plague which from time to time appeared, point their moral, as indicative, that if the renewed energy at present shown in the detection of heretics was allowed to subside, the disease might burst out again with still greater force than before.

To add weight to this argument, several persons suffered death for heresy in the Piazza, most of whom were men of distinction and education, it being the policy of the Holy Office to choose their victims from the more elevated orders of society, especially from the learned professions, in order to show to the poorer and more ignorant that in the crusade now being carried on, no respect was attached to

personal dignity or importance, but rather, on the contrary, that punishment should be the more severe on those who, from intelligence and experience, ought, as they argued, to have set an example to the Church instead of falling from it.

It is no unfrequent defence made by the admirers of the Inquisition, that the fathers never condemned a heretic to death, but simply handed them over to the secular power. When once, however, they were adjudged irreclaimable, the municipal authorities knew but too well the wish of the Inquisitors, who, in fact, as much condemned their prisoners to death as the civil judge who condemns a murderer to the galleys; neither the sentence of the judge nor the condemnation of the Inquisitor being sufficient in themselves without the authority of the governing civil power, although to demand it were, in both cases, merely a matter of form

before the sentence being put into execution.

One credit is due to the administration of the laws in Ferrara. Although many persons suffered death in the Piazza, there was far less cruelty shown in these exhibitions than was to be found in the *auto da fés* of Spain or the burnings in Smithfield. When the condemned heretics were to be burnt, the municipality insisted on the victims being first strangled, so as to deprive them in great portion of the agony they would have suffered in the flames. Again, many of them were simply beheaded, and their bodies afterwards given to their friends, and that variety and ingenuity which appears to have been one of the characteristics of punishment for ecclesiastical offences in the Middle Ages, seems to a considerable extent to have been wanting in Ferrara. Whether this was rather due to the more humane disposition of the

ecclesiastics or to the civil authority of Ferrara, remains uncertain.

A singular feature in the manner of conducting the executions, whether for civil or ecclesiastical offences, must be noticed. It was the custom in Ferrara, at some short distance, to erect a *loggione*, or raised seats in front of the scaffold on which the victim was to suffer, for the accommodation of the principal nobility of the city who were invited to witness executions whenever the guilty individual was either of personal importance or suffering for an ecclesiastical offence. Although the invitations to attend these executions were worded in a complimentary manner, and as a mark of civility to the persons to whom they were addressed, it is more than probable that the custom originated among the Dukes of Ferrara by way of impressing on the nobles in the Duchy that no matter how high might be their authority or elevated their position, it would make no difference in their punish-

ment should they rebel against the State or in any way offend the laws so as to merit a sentence of death.

During the executions which were now being inflicted on the condemned heretics, the invitations were issued as usual, possibly with the idea of instilling in the minds of the nobility that heresy was as unpardonable a crime with them as with the lower orders. Tradition also says that the Duke himself attended many of these executions, but this fact is strongly denied by several even liberal Catholic writers; and it must be admitted to his credit there is no contemporaneous document or record to prove that he was present on any one occasion.

But if the punishment of death was awarded by the secular authorities, the minor punishments, many of them scarcely less severe than death itself, certainly were awarded by direct order of the Inquisition. Nor is this the only proof, at any rate in Ferrara, for in a list of the different persons

who were punished for heresy, those who suffered death are always mentioned as being given over to the secular authorities for execution.* The other punishments have no such note or remark added to them.

It would be harassing to the feelings of the reader to detail at any length the nature and method of these punishments. Suffice it to say that among them were confiscation of all goods, condemnation to the galleys for life or for shorter periods, lengthened imprisonment, the torture and severe floggings, often repeated in the same individual. One of the most cruel punishments short of death was the amputation of the tongue of those who had been convicted of speaking disrespectfully of the Virgin or the saints, or denying the divinity of the former. Another punishment was also of very frequent occurrence, that of nailing the tongue to a log of

* *Dato al braccio secolare.*

wood. In the account-books of the municipality of Ferrara in the sixteenth century, which are still extant, are many entries during the reign of Ercole II., the husband of Renée, for the purchase of logs of wood and nails for this punishment. This punishment, which generally lasted for two hours, was ordered to be inflicted on all those detected of having thrice spoken irreverently even against any of the saints; while blasphemy of the Virgin Mary was punished at least by amputation of the tongue.

But numerous as were the recantations which took place under this cruel system, Protestantism still existed to a considerable extent in Ferrara, and Oriz and the Inquisitors exerted themselves even more energetically than before to subdue it. So firm a hold had it taken that no inconsiderable number of persons punished were members of the priesthood, and among those in high authority several bishops in the Duchy were strongly suspected of entertaining

heretical opinions. Although Oriz was certainly the prime instigator in the movement, having the supreme control, still he appeared but little in public, confining himself principally within the walls of the Dominican Convent, and from thence issuing his orders, hearing examinations, and deciding on the particular policy best to be adopted at the moment.

For nearly a week Teresa remained in solitary imprisonment, more than once during that time appearing before the Syndaco, who on each occasion, sometimes by threats, at others by entreaties, attempted to obtain from her her name and place of abode, though without effect. At last, tired of being refused, unwilling to inflict on her the torture of the cord to extort her secret, and having through the energetic behaviour of the Inquisitors an unusual amount of duty thrown on him to perform, he resolved to trouble himself no more about her, but to trust that chance

might throw in his way some information respecting her when he should be less occupied. At the same time he considered that to allow a disobedience to his authority as flagrant as that shown by Teresa, would be subversive of all prison discipline, and finding that there appeared no symptom of her being attacked by the plague, he ordered her to be removed from solitary confinement, and placed with the other female prisoners, where she was to remain till she obeyed his orders to give him her name and address. Probably he might also have thought that by placing her in society with the other female prisoners, it might have the effect of making her silence give way the sooner. He could easily perceive that she was a girl, not merely in a respectable, but evidently of an elevated position in society, and therefore likely to be soon disgusted with her fellow-prisoners, many of whom were of the lowest and most disreputable description.

If such were his thoughts, he was doomed to be disappointed, for although many of the prisoners were from the most degraded of the female population in Ferrara, there were also several others who had been arrested for holding Protestant opinions, and were awaiting their examinations before the Inquisitors. These easily recognising each other, formed a separate community among themselves, though even here the terrible espionage which had been established in Ferrara was visible, for while each unhappy prisoner earnestly wished for advice and consolation from the others, all were afraid to seek a confidante, lest they might choose one for the purpose who would, the next opportunity, betray them. Still a sort of intimacy, if not friendship, existed between them. They conversed together, and though cautious of saying a word that might betray their own feelings, they did not hesitate to speak on matters which were reported to have occurred

outside the prison walls. Among these subjects was naturally that of the imprisonment of the Duchess Renée. And here Teresa again heard it corroborated that she was imprisoned in the dungeons of the Castle, that her daughters were not allowed to see her, and that all her attendants had been arrested.

Fortunately among the female prisoners who had been arrested on charges of Protestantism, two only appeared to know Teresa. Even of these, one a respectable, aged woman, the wife of a lawyer, who was well known to the Judge Biagio Rosetti, Teresa was hardly certain, for beyond occasionally an expressive and significative glance, which probably might have been misunderstood, she gave no other sign, nor did she speak a word bearing on the subject. The other was a young married lady, whose husband was also imprisoned on a charge of Protestantism, but confined in the dungeons of the prison of the Corpus

Domini. Between this lady and Teresa, although they said not a word on religious subjects, a strong current of sympathy existed. They were frequently seated by each other's side for hours together, little conversation, however, passing between them. After a few days' acquaintance the lady quitted the prison to appear before the Inquisitors, and Teresa never saw her again. The night she left, on bidding adieu to Teresa, she flung her arms round the young girl's neck, and kissing her tenderly, whispered in her ear, "May you be speedily released! I know you, but fear nothing; I will keep your secret. God bless you!" And then, after again kissing her, she turned from her, and left with the guard who were waiting to accompany her and some other prisoners to the convent.

A circumstance at last took place at the Lazaretto which had the effect of breaking Teresa's incognito, and bringing her

under the notice of the Inquisition. On the subsidence of the plague in Ferrara (for during the week which followed the death of Madonna Ponte only two cases had been brought to the Lazaretto), the Becca-morti, by orders of the Signori della Sanita, were confined to the Lazaretto, that they might avoid the possibility of communicating the plague again to the citizens, yet be kept in readiness to act in case of necessity. By degrees, as the feeling of security against any further appearance of the plague increased, the Becca-morti occasionally, though only one at a time, received leave of absence for a day, under the condition they did not enter the city gates. This indulgence, however, was not extended to those in charge of the sick and convalescent in the Lazaretto (and there were many), as it was feared they might convey the disease to others. As Carlo Pedretti had quitted the Becca-morti, of course he could not obtain permission to

visit the mainland, although he frequently applied for it. At first Carlo indignantly resented these refusals as being grossly unjust. He attempted to explain to the barber under whom he now acted, for he had too much dread of the medical officers to complain to them, that those employed in removing the dead had as much right to be allowed a holiday on shore as the Becca-morti, and refused to admit the reason assigned, that he was more likely from his peculiar duties to communicate the disease.

As days passed on, Pedretti became still more desirous of a holiday, if only for one day, urging that as there were now but few patients in the Lazaretto, and those who remained were convalescent, and for several days there had not been a death, there could be no objection to his being allowed leave of absence for one day, adding that he had to transact some business of great importance in the city, whilst

every day which passed over without his performing it was greatly to his detriment. Still the barber was inexorable, and refused to convey his request to the head physician. Carlo then changed his plea, and said that his business was of great importance, and concerned the Holy Office. The barber was now afraid longer to deny his application, and he communicated it to Dr. Boschi. At the time of his interview with the head physician, the Syndaco's substitute was engaged with him, who hearing that Carlo's wish to go into the city arose from some intelligence he had to communicate to the Inquisitors, suggested that Carlo should be admitted, and questioned as to the revelation he had to make. The physician assenting, the barber left the room, and a few minutes afterwards returned in company with Carlo, who, on seeing the substitute, whom he knew well by sight, appeared greatly embarrassed, though he quickly recovered his self-possession.

“You have some communication, I understand, to make to the Holy Office?” said the substitute, who was seated at a table beside the physician. “As I am in their service, would you have any objection to tell me what it is?”

“I cannot, *Excellenza*,” said Pedretti.

“Why not?”

“Because I am a poor man, and by telling you I might lose the reward which otherwise I should receive.”

“Not so,” said the substitute. “On the contrary, I will myself be a guarantee that it is paid you; that is to say, if your information is of sufficient importance to merit it.”

“It is of great importance, *Excellenza*; but I would rather take it to the Holy Office myself.”

“Then I cannot interfere with the rules of the Lazaretto. You may retire.”

Carlo made a step towards the door,

and then stopping, he turned round and said to the substitute—

“My information is respecting a heretic of importance.”

“The greater the necessity for my knowing the details, and immediately too,” said the substitute, “as I might be able to take steps without delay for his arrest. You had better be more candid with me.”

“It is a lady.”

“Indeed! Now, tell me her name.”

“I do not know it,” said Carlo, “and she is now dead. She died several days ago.”

“And this, then, is the first time you have mentioned it?” asked the substitute, sternly.

Carlo made no reply.

“How did you know she was a heretic?”

“Because she was accompanied by a young girl who looked like one.”

The substitute here whispered something to the physician, who opened the diary of the patients admitted, and pointed to the name of Madonna Ponte. A look of great surprise for a moment passed across the face of the substitute, but he made no remark.

“Have you no other reason for believing her to be a heretic?” he said to Carlo.

No reply was given to the question, and the substitute continued—

“It would be absurd to trouble the Holy Office if you have no further information to give them. You may go.”

Carlo hesitated for a moment, and then said, “When I removed the corpse a heretic’s Prayer-book fell from her pocket.”

“Where is it?”

“Am I obliged to give it?”

“If you do not do so willingly, I will

order you to be searched, and in that case you will assuredly lose the reward you might otherwise receive."

Carlo, when he heard this, reluctantly put his hand in his pocket, and drew from it a small beautifully-bound book, which he placed on the table. The substitute took it up, and on opening it found it was, as Carlo had stated, a Protestant book of prayers. On examining it further, he found written on the blank fly-leaf—

"Alla Madonna Ponte,

"Renée di Francia,

"Duchessa di Ferrara."

The substitute handed the book to the physician, who examined it attentively.

"And how did you know this book belonged to a lady of importance?" the substitute asked Carlo.

"From the white eagle (the crest of the Este family) on the binding."

“Not from the writing in the inside?”

“I cannot read writing,” said Carlo.

“I admit that the book should be delivered to the Holy Office,” said the substitute, “and I promise you that any reward they may give you shall receive. Now tell me your name, that they may not mistake you for another.”

“Carlo Pedretti, Eccellenza. I am a poor man, and shall be most grateful for any reward the Reverend Fathers may accord me.”

“Well, now you may go.”

Pedretti had hardly reached the door when the substitute said—

“One word more. I understand you say the only object you found on the deceased lady was this book?”

“That was all, Eccellenza,” said Pedretti, hurrying on.

“Do not be in such haste. Come here

for a moment. You solemnly assure me you found nothing else?"

"Nothing whatever," said Carlo, now turning pale. "Nothing whatever."

"Well, I will not dispute what you say, at the same time I must satisfy myself of the truth. Remain here while I, only for the sake of form, send some one to examine your room."

"I swear to you, *Excellenza*, by all the saints, that nothing belonging to the lady will be found there."

"Well, then," said the substitute sternly, and rising from his seat, "you may have it about you. Seize him and search him," he continued, addressing an attendant.

Pedretti, now in the extremity of terror, pressed his hands together, and implored the substitute to have patience with him, and he would tell him all. He had found something more, he said, but that he intended faithfully to place it in possession

of the Holy Office. On being asked what it was, he drew from his pocket an embroidered velvet purse, with a gold clasp, and placed it on the table. The substitute opened it, and found it contained several ducats in gold. He was about to address Pedretti when the physician interposed.

“Stay one moment,” he said, “this affair comes within my jurisdiction.” Then turning to Carlo, he continued, “You have committed the gravest offence that can be perpetrated in the Lazaretto short of absolute murder, and you shall receive for it the punishment you merit. Make your peace with heaven, for to-morrow you die.”

A cry of terror now escaped from the wretched old man, and he abjectly implored forgiveness. It was in vain, however, and he was led away, and locked up in a cell used as the Lazaretto prison, there to await his execution the next

morning. In the course of the day, the physician took a milder view of the offence, and ordered instead a singular punishment, which had been frequently practised on notorious thieves in Ferrara since the days of Duke Borso. He was banished from the Duchy, after having the tip of his nose amputated, that he might be recognised should he return. The amputation was performed the next morning, and afterwards, a few pence having been given him to prevent his dying of starvation, he was landed on the further bank of the river, with the assurance that, if he were ever again found in the Ferrarese territory, he would infallibly be hung.

The substitute now quitted the Lazaretto, and retired to the Palace of Justice to inform the Syndaco of the discovery he had made. The Syndaco listened with great attention, and after minutely examining the prayer-book and purse, he immediately understood all.

“There is no doubt,” he said, “the poor woman who died in the Lazaretto was no other than the Madonna Ponte, who was one of the ladies in waiting on the Duchess, and the young girl her companion is the same we now have in our custody, and who will not give her name. From the first I felt certain she was some one of importance, most probably also one of the ladies attached to the court of her Highness.”

“Could we not discover it by going over the list of names of those included in the first proclamation? We could ascertain the names of the accused already under arrest, and of those still at large, and find if one of them is our prisoner.”

“Very probably we might succeed, but I shall have but little pleasure in the discovery when made,” replied the Syndaco. “No, I would rather throw the onus of the discovery on the Holy Office itself. Let us go together to the convent and ask for an interview with the Reverend Father

Oriz. You can then report to him the discovery you have made, as well as place in his hands the prayer-book and purse. For my own part, I shall not be sorry to be relieved from all further responsibility in the matter."

The book was now carefully enveloped in paper, so that it might be left for the Reverend Father's inspection, could an interview with him not be obtained, and the Syndaco and his substitute then left the Palace of Justice for the convent. On arriving they were informed that the Reverend Father Oriz was so much indisposed, he could not that day grant an interview to any one, and they had orders from his physician not to disturb him. Possibly on the morrow, the lay brother said, he might be able to see them, or, should he feel equal to it sooner, notice could be immediately sent to the Palace of Justice. The Syndaco then left the book with the lay brother for the Inquisitor's in-

spection, and he and his substitute quitted the convent.

For the two days following the departure from the prison of the young married lady who had been arrested with her husband on a charge of Protestantism, Teresa remained without a companion, her thoughts almost entirely occupied in conjuring up events respecting her father, for which she had not the slightest data to go upon. That he was in danger there could be but little doubt, and but too much probability that he might be already in the hands of the Inquisitors. And Camille Gurdon, where was he? Could he also have been arrested, or had he accompanied Ochino in his flight? The latter idea, natural as it was, had hardly been formed than Teresa rejected it almost with indignation.

Her thoughts now reverted to her father, and from him they turned to Madonna Ponte, the uncertainty of whose fate was probably more painful to the young girl than the cer-

tainty of her death and consequent release from the persecutions she would most probably have to endure, would have been should she recover. In this state she continued, her mind frequently changing from one subject to another of the few that were interesting to her—and her interest in the *world* was now concentrated on but few objects—till the night of the second day after her friend's departure, when the head warder entered. He beckoned to Teresa to follow him, and then led her into a small room, where she found the Syndaco and his substitute.

“Leave us for a moment, warder,” said the Syndaco, “but remain within call.”

As soon as the warder had closed the door after him, the Syndaco said to Teresa,—

“My child, I have just received a message from the Holy Office to bring you before the Reverend Fathers, who

wish to question you. I also must be present and answer any questions which may be put to me, and I should be sorry to be obliged to bear witness against you as having been rebellious against the legal authorities."

"In what have I been guilty of any offence?" said Teresa, whose terror of being sent for by the Inquisitors knew no bounds. "If I have offended you, it has been unintentionally. Oh! pray forgive me! I would endure anything here, rather than go before the Inquisitors."

"I have no alternative but to obey their orders and bring you before them," said the Syndaco. "The evidence I shall have to give against you is that, contrary to the law, you refused to give me your name when I required it. Be reasonable, and tell it me now. I ask it solely for your welfare. It is all I can say against you, and if you will tell it me now, all I say shall be in your favour."

Teresa was silent for a moment. Terrible, however, as was the alarm she felt at the prospect of offending the Inquisitors, her anxiety for her father's safety was greater, and she replied, that she could not tell her name.

"Then I have no alternative," said the Syndaco, sadly. "If you will not tell me your name," he continued, after a moment's silence, "let me advise you not to withhold it from the Reverend Fathers. Nay more, answer honestly every question they may put to you."

"There are some things I will not tell them," said Teresa, now animated with the courage of despair.

"My child, my child, do not say so. You little know those you will soon have to deal with."

"They cannot make me speak if I will not," said Teresa, firmly.

"Cannot!" said the Syndaco. "My poor child, before you quit them this evening

they will draw from you your most inmost thoughts, yes, every one you have formed—even those you would conceal with your life's blood—they will tear from you. I never yet met one who could resist the torture as they there apply it. If you do not answer them, they will fasten your hands together with a cord, and by it will raise you with a jerk from the ground till possibly the joints will be torn from the sockets, and then you will be questioned and your answers written down. That concluded, you will be again submitted—” Here Teresa turned ghastly pale, and was evidently on the point of fainting. The Syndaco hurriedly called to the warder to bring him a cup of water, with which he bathed the poor girl's temples, and soon recovered her.

“And now, my poor child,” he said, “we must delay no longer. Summon up your courage, and on our road to the convent ponder over what I have said, and take my advice.”

Teresa, who seemed bewildered and hardly recovered from the shock she had felt at hearing the description of the torture to which she would be subjected if she refused to state her name and thus betray her father, now left the prison in which she had been so many days confined, and, escorted by the Syndaco, the head warder, and a soldier of the municipal guard disguised as a civilian, proceeded towards the Dominican convent. As they went through the streets they maintained the strictest silence, so as not to attract attention. The cool evening air had somewhat the effect of clearing the brain of Teresa, and she looked with curiosity on the different passengers visible in the streets, as if anxiously expecting to see some one she knew. Nothing, however, occurred worthy of notice on their way, and at length they reached the building at the back of the convent, in which the business of the Holy Office was conducted.

On entering, the Syndaco told the lay brother on duty in the hall that he had brought the prisoner ordered by the Reverend Father Oriz.

“You have been delayed, have you not?” said the lay brother. “The Reverend Fathers have been for some time expecting you, and are already assembled in the council chamber. I will inform them you are here.” So saying, he left the hall, and a few moments afterwards entered it to conduct the Syndaco and his prisoner into the presence of the Inquisitors.

The sight which presented itself on entering the council chamber might have struck terror in the mind of a person of stronger nerves than the poor girl who was now brought before the Inquisitors. The room, which was lofty, was lighted by one huge brazen lamp which hung suspended from the ceiling, nearly in the centre, but in such a position as to cast a strong light on the countenance of the prisoner under

examination. A long table separated Teresa, who was attended by the Syndaco, from her judges, and these were seated opposite to her at the table, and were all dressed in the frocks of Dominican monks. In their centre, and exactly opposite to the spot on which Teresa stood, sat Oriz in a chair somewhat more pretentious than the rest. He was ghastly pale, and had the appearance as if he had been suffering from ill-health and had not yet fairly recovered. Except for the extraordinary lustre in his keen black eye, Teresa might almost have taken him for a waxen figure, so motionless was he. On his right sat Father Fabrizio, who exercised the office of Chief Inquisitor before the arrival of Oriz, and to his left, a monk of the same order who acted as secretary, having a large manuscript book open before him, and a pen and ink-horn by his side. Behind the monks seated at the table were several others clad in the dress

of the same order, who were but obscurely seen, the light from the lamp reaching them but slightly. One other person remains to be noticed. He was a tall, powerfully built, beetle-browed man, of stern brutal features, and coarsely clad. As Teresa entered, her eye for a moment fell on him, and even when standing terrified before the Inquisitors her thoughts were still shared with the dread she felt at the repulsive-looking individual she had noticed when she entered.

The examination now commenced by the secretary asking Teresa her name. The girl remained perfectly silent, unwilling to state it, yet afraid to refuse. After a moment's pause Oriz said—

“Her name is Teresa Rosetti, and she is the daughter of the Judge Biagio Rosetti, and one of the ladies in waiting on her Highness.”

Teresa looked at him with wonder. While he spoke, he still continued to gaze

on her, and the words seemed to proceed without effort of any kind from his lips. Teresa now for the first time remembered she had seen him before. It was on the day when he had his interview with the Duchess, but illness had so altered him that she did not recognise him till she heard his voice.

After the secretary had entered her name, he asked her where her father resided.

"Pray do not ask me," said Teresa, sorrowfully. "I dare not answer you."

"Do not be obstinate, maiden," said the secretary. "A reply we must have, and we should be sorry to resort to painful means to obtain it."

"How can I betray my own father?" said Teresa.

"There are circumstances," said Oriz, with a solemn tone of voice, "in which denouncing a parent may be of the greatest possible welfare to that parent's soul. It

may be so here in this instance with your own father, though both you and he are at the present time guilty of holding the damnable heresy promulgated by the arch-heretics, John Calvin and Bernardino Ochino. Do not misunderstand me. You must inform us where your father and Ochino are now to be found."

"I know nothing of Ochino," said Teresa.

"Maiden, do not say so, for we know to the contrary," said Oriz. "We know that when he arrived in Ferrara your father first sheltered him, and afterwards conducted him to the Palace of San Francesco to the Duchess, and while there, you, on more than one occasion, were the means of communication between him and your father. Can you deny it?"

Teresa remained silent.

"Once more I ask you, can you deny it?"

Teresa still made no reply.

“Why are you so obstinate, girl?” said Oriz. “Know that the proof is in our own hands. Brother Felix,” he continued, though without turning his head, to one of the monks behind him, “was not this prisoner on more than one occasion the means of communication between the heretic Bernardino Ochino and the Judge Biagio Rosetti?”

“She was,” said the monk, in a low tone of voice.

Low as was the tone in which the reply was uttered, it fell on the ear of Teresa with little less effect than a heavy peal of thunder would have made. She staggered, and would have fallen had she not advanced to the table and leant on it for support.


“Come forward, Brother Felix,” said Oriz, “and let the prisoner see how futile on her part will be any further attempt at concealment.”

A movement was now made among the

monks to allow Brother Felix to come forward. When he had arrived near the table, Teresa cast her eyes on him, and then uttering a loud scream, fell senseless on the floor—the witness now clad in the garb of a novice of the Dominican order was no other than Camille Gurdon.

CHAPTER III.

FRA FELIX.

REAT excitement was visible on the habitually calm, well-disciplined countenances of the Dominican monks present in the council chamber when they saw Teresa fall senseless on the floor before them. Some of them went further, and quitting their seats walked round to the side of the table to assist the Syndaco in raising her. Even the executioner (the ill-looking man whom Teresa had noticed when she entered, standing in the obscurity at the further end of the room), unbidden, came forward to assist her. Brother Felix, as we shall for the future call him, remained motionless on the

spot where Teresa had recognised him. Whether overwhelmed with shame at the effect his infamy had produced on her, or not to awaken suspicion in the mind of his superior that he was in any way interested in the girl, it would be difficult to say. Perhaps he might have had for the first time some idea of the feeling Teresa entertained for him, and was overtaken by surprise. That he had for some time ardently loved her is true, although at first he had been actuated solely by the vanity of wishing to make an impression on the heart of so pretty a girl.

Such behaviour was certainly utterly at variance with the rules of the Dominican order (in which he had previously enrolled himself as a novice, and afterwards, in the ardour of enthusiasm, offered to play the spy in the cause of the Holy Inquisition), but possibly Camille might have considered that, in assuming a lay character, it would not have been unpardonable to follow a more

secular line of conduct than was altogether in accordance with the vows he was about to take. He had originally been educated as a Protestant, but afterwards became a pervert to the Roman Catholic faith, and like most other perverts was more enthusiastic in the advancement of his new creed than those who had been born, bred, and trained in it. From his insinuating and courteous manners, he had been especially told off to watch and report on all that took place in the house of the Judge Rosetti, and through Teresa, even in the Palace of San Francesco itself. And well did he perform the duties assigned him. Although, as before stated, that which he had commenced as a mere passing flirtation, at last developed itself into an ardent passion, so much so indeed, that he was upon the point of declaring himself openly to Teresa, and endeavouring to persuade her to elope with him as his wife, when Oriz arrived in Ferrara.

After examining the organization of the Inquisition in Ferrara, Oriz made many alterations in it, and among them—whether from any suspicion of the real circumstances of the case it would be difficult to say—he ordered Brother Felix to assume his novice's dress, and to confine himself to the walls of the convent, where he was to remain preparatory to being sent, with a monk, in charge of a special message to the General of the Order in Rome. Since he had received his superior's command to wear the monastic dress, Brother Felix, with great readiness, submitted to the order not to quit the walls of the convent. And it might have been dangerous for many reasons, for he had, when assuming the part of a layman, made many acquaintances in the city, and were he now to be recognised as a novice of a religious order, it might not only cause great scandal to his convent, but have incurred for him considerable personal danger as well.

With great difficulty they succeeded in restoring animation in Teresa, and when a reaction took place, so violent a fit of hysterics came on as to show the Inquisitors it would be utterly useless to carry the examination further that evening. Oriz also, who had remained motionless in his seat, without betraying the slightest sign of sympathy or anxiety in his countenance, disappointed as he was at not having been able to obtain from Teresa the abode of her father, saw it would be useless.

"We will not continue our examination further at present," he said. "Carry her back to your prison," he continued, turning to the Syndaco, "and there let her be attended with every care so as to enable her sufficiently to recover herself for us to question her further on the subject to-morrow."

"At what hour would you wish her to be brought here, Reverend Father?" inquired the Syndaco.

“Her examination to-morrow,” said Oriz, “can take place in the Question Chamber in the Palace of Justice. See that all is prepared for it, and the executioner in attendance, should it unfortunately be requisite to submit her to the torture. I will conduct the examination myself—that is to say, if my health will allow me. If not, I will send a substitute. Let everything be in readiness by noon. And now remove her. Lend me your arm, Brother Felix,” he continued—possibly noticing that the novice was about joining the group who had encircled Teresa, “lend me your arm, for I still feel very weak.” So saying he rose from his seat, and leaning on the arm of Brother Felix, slowly quitted the council chamber.

Considerably more humanity was shown to Teresa after the chief Inquisitor had quitted the council chamber than during his presence. Even the monk who had acted as secretary seemed interested in the

fate of the beautiful girl, and he ordered a lay brother to see that Oriz's own litter was prepared to carry her to the Palace of Justice. Presently the lay brother returned with the information that the litter was in readiness, and the Syndaco, taking Teresa in his arms, carried her downstairs and placed her in it, and he and his assistants proceeded towards the Palace of Justice, the Syndaco from time to time whispering as they went in the poor girl's ear some words of consolation, which, however, she heard not. On arriving at the Palace of Justice she was carried into one of the audience rooms, where she remained in a half fainting condition till a cell, or rather strong chamber which was occasionally used for detaining prisoners of importance before their examination, was prepared for her. In the meantime the wife of one of the warders, who was usually employed as a nurse, when the illness of any of the superior prisoners required attend-

ance, was sent for and ordered to sit up the night with Teresa. The Syndaco also told her that every attention was to be shown her patient, and should the attendance of the physician of the prison be necessary, he was to be sent for, as the prisoner would have to undergo an examination the next day, and it was necessary she should be able to support it.

All being in readiness, Teresa was removed to the cell which had been prepared for her, and placed under the charge of the nurse. For some time she remained quiet, or rather in a bewildered condition, answering at hazard any questions or remarks made to her by the nurse. As time passed on she began to collect her faculties and realize her position, and the events of the evening. The result was a flood of tears in which she indulged without restraint, as the woman who had been set especially to watch over her was now fast asleep. When day broke Teresa became

more calm, and sat on her bed in a quiet resigned frame of mind, apparently willing to submit to anything that might be ordered, apart from the delivering up the secret of her father's abode.

About two hours before mid-day the Syndaco entered the cell and told her to prepare herself for the examination which would take place at noon.

“And once more let me beg of you, my child,” he said, “to answer candidly any questions which will be put to you. You must be perfectly well aware that even if you have the courage to support the torture—which I much doubt—it will merely delay for a day or two the discovery of your father's abode, for every dwelling in Ferrara, from the palaces of the Duke to the poorest hovel in the suburbs, will be searched to find him! And if found, then how much more severe will be your punishment, and without having benefited him. You will be accused of having remained

obdurate, not only to the demands of the police of Ferrara, but to the Holy Inquisitors as well, and your silence will be brought forward as a reason for increasing the severity of your punishment as a heretic ; while your candid answers might very probably have the effect of mitigating it. Now take my advice, and answer the questions when put to you."

Teresa made no verbal reply to the good-natured Syndaco, but merely shook her head, while the tears gathered in her eyes.

"Well, my child, I can do no more," he said. "I hope before the examination commences you will be in a more reasonable frame of mind."

During the time which passed before the examination was to take place, Teresa remained to all outward appearance calm and resigned, if not indifferent to her fate, while her thoughts were of the most agitated description. Although she firmly

resolved no torture she might be put to should induce her to betray her father, he was not now the one uppermost in her thoughts, which were nearly exclusively occupied with the young Swiss whom she had known as Camille Gurdon. Till the discovery of his treachery (and of which had she been informed, no arguments would have induced her to believe) she was not aware herself of the impression he had made on her heart. That she greatly admired him was true, and also that she had the fullest reliance in his honour and integrity; but she was hardly aware that she had any warmer feeling for him. She now found how terribly mistaken she had been, and that she had conceived in her heart a latent love for him of immense power, and that this love had been developed by a sudden shock of the most cruel and unexpected description. She had placed with the most perfect reliance, not only her own and her father's welfare

in his power and keeping; but even their lives—and now she perceived that this man who, although unknown to herself, was in the words of Juliet the “god of her idolatry,” was nothing better than a despicable spy. In so detestable a light did his behaviour now appear, that great as her love for him unknowingly had been, she, in a spirit of true girlhood, felt herself degraded at having bestowed her affections on a being so contemptible.

In this frame of mind, occasionally mingled with anxiety for her father’s safety, and thoughts on the Duchess Renée, imprisoned in her dungeon in the Castle, the time passed till the hour for the examination approached, when the door of her cell opened, and the head warder made his appearance. He told her that a Reverend Father had arrived from the convent to make preparations for the examination, which would now take place in less than half an hour, and that he had requested she should

be brought before him that he might advise her on the folly of her attempting to withhold any information from the Chief Inquisitor when he arrived, and to explain how much more severe her punishment would be should she neglect to follow his advice.

Teresa mechanically rose from her seat and followed the warder down a long corridor, terminating in a flight of steps which led to a door opening on to the Question Chamber. It was a small octagonal room, the only furniture consisting of one or two seats and a table, while before them hung from the centre of the room the cord and pulley habitually used in extorting evidence from unwilling witnesses and offenders. As the cord, at the moment Teresa entered, was somewhat above the line of vision, she saw it not. Her eye was fixed on a Dominican brother, who, with his back towards her, was preparing some papers and an ink-horn ready for the exa-

mination. On hearing their footsteps as they entered, he turned his head slightly, but not in such a manner as for Teresa to see his features, and said in a whisper to the warder as he approached, "Leave us for a few minutes, but be within call if I want you."

A slight expression of surprise passed over the warder's countenance, but he made no reply and quitted the room, leaving the monk and the prisoner together.

As soon as the warder had quitted the room and closed the door after him, the monk quickly turned round, and throwing back the hood he had worn, displayed to the astonished girl the features of her late lover, the now Brother Felix. She was about to utter a cry of alarm, when he advanced towards her and said, hurriedly—

"Teresa, recover yourself. Do not be alarmed, or you may bring ruin on both

of us. Listen to me with attention, for in a few minutes Oriz and the Inquisitors will be here. I have stolen from the convent contrary to orders solely to save you if I can. Follow my advice, and when they ask you for the abode of your father, give them a false one without hesitation. Let it be outside the city or at some distance, say at Lagoscuro or Commacchio if you please, so as to give time; and while the Inquisitors seek for him, I will take steps for you to escape from this prison, and we will fly together."

Teresa made him no verbal reply, but drawing herself up, cast on him a glance of combined indignation and contempt.

"Ah! Teresa," he continued, "you have good reason to hold me in aversion, I admit, but bitterly do I regret the wrong I have done you. Now let me make amends for it by saving you if I can, and," he continued, advancing and attempting

to take her hand, which she instantly drew from him, "succeed in it I will, for I have both the courage and strength for the attempt, and the ingenuity to carry it out. Now do not hesitate, for every moment lost renders the difficulty of your escape the greater."

Teresa still made him no reply, but with great dignity in her attitude, continued to cast on him the same look of scorn and reproach.

"Nay, Teresa, if I am so loathsome in your eyes that you will not listen to me, let your own interest and that of your father guide you in this matter. Remember it is not solely your welfare that is at stake. Continue to hold me in contempt and detestation if you please, but give me the opportunity to save you and your father, and thus redress some of the evil I have committed. I can do so without fail—that is to say, if your father is not at this moment within the walls of Ferrara,

though if he were, even then I might still succeed; but the difficulty would be greater. Will you grant me but that favour, even though afterwards you may continue to hold me in the contempt you now do?"

Teresa for the moment somewhat altered her manner, and for the first time spoke to him.

"How am I to know," she said, with great emphasis in her tone, "that you are not at this moment deceiving me, and that by making this offer you are merely trying to draw from me the abode of my poor father in order that you may betray him?"

"Teresa," said Brother Felix, looking at her with a certain amount of respectful reproach, "can you consider me capable of such despicable treachery?"

Teresa made him no answer, but regarded him with a calm, dignified, stern look.

“I cannot blame you,” said the wretched man, “but what can I do? For heaven’s sake listen to reason. I tell you that were I even at this moment the traitor you believe me to be, you could not injure your father by escaping and giving me the chance of assisting him. His arrest is merely a question of time. It would be impossible for him to attempt to leave the Ferrarese territory, and you in the danger you are at present. What then have I to gain? Yes,” he continued, placing his hands together in an imploring manner, “I have something to gain, and that is your—I will not say love, but forgiveness for the injuries I have already done you. Ay, Teresa, contemptible as you may think me, I do love you even better than life itself, as I am willing to prove to you, and that without hope of return, for I am now only anxious to do all I can to make some compensation for the misery I have caused.”

Teresa made him no answer. She could

have said there was another sin he had committed, and one of no little magnitude in the eyes of the noble-minded girl. He had succeeded in engaging her affections, and that to an extent she had not dreamed of herself, and, as she now had found, was utterly unworthy of them. She looked at him attentively for a moment, and appeared on the point of speaking; but by an effort she restrained herself, and turning her head from him remained silent. Brother Felix noticed her hesitation, and probably imagining that his words were not lost on her, he continued,—

“Why do you not answer me? Believe me, you have not a moment to lose. A few minutes hence it will be too late. Consider what I propose, and then say if it is possible for me to be actuated by an unworthy motive. I not only offer to relieve you from the torture, but to restore to you and your father liberty and life, and that almost to a certainty by the loss of my own.

Ay," he continued, noticing an expression of doubt on the girl's countenance, "to the loss of my own! Once outside the Ferrarese territory, you and your father will be safe, while I, in any country I might be where there may be a Dominican friar, or even a Romish priest, am likely to be denounced and sent as a prisoner to Rome. As you must see, I have nothing to gain. Let me once more implore you to follow my advice, and give some false and distant address as your father's present residence; and before they can have discovered the truth, I shall have found means to accomplish both your own and his escape."

Teresa now turned her head towards him, and after regarding him attentively for a moment, said,—

"Listen to me, and take my answer as the only one I shall give you. Dear as my life is to me, and terrible as the torture may be that I shall suffer, I will endure it

rather than either my father or myself should receive liberty at your hands. I know," she continued, seeing Brother Felix was about to speak, "what you would say. You would attempt to prove to me that I overrate both my courage and powers of endurance, but my reliance is on God, who is able to perform"—here her voice quivered, and her eyes filled with tears—"to perform greater wonders than to endow a young girl with power to support the torture that may be applied to her, and even the certainty of death afterwards, when the motive instigating her is to save the life of an honoured and much-loved parent. A thousand times," she continued, the gathered tear in her eye now falling down her cheek, "rather support whatever the malice of our enemies might think fit to inflict on me than obtain relief from the hands of——"

Here her voice completely failed her, and

placing one hand before her eyes, she wept silently and bitterly.

“Teresa,” said Brother Felix, “you know not what you will have to endure. You know not the terrible power,” he continued, “of that small cord in extracting words from an unwilling witness.”

Finding Teresa made him no answer, he pointed with one hand to the cord, which was slightly drawn up above their heads, while with the other he endeavoured to withdraw the hand which covered her eyes, so as to call her attention to it. But Teresa had no sooner felt the pressure of his hand than she withdrew herself from his reach with the quickness of lightning, glancing at him with a look of intense indignation, as if insulted by his touch. Instinctively the moment afterwards her eyes followed the direction of his finger which pointed to the cord, and she shuddered as she beheld it.

“A few minutes hence,” Brother Felix

continued, "and you will be suffering the terrible agony that simple instrument of torture is capable of inflicting, and strong as your resolution may be at this moment, it must be superhuman indeed if capable of supporting it. Think but for one moment of the penalty which would await one incautious word uttered under such torment. Once more, give me an answer without delay. The time is fast approaching for the Inquisitors to arrive, and the next moment they may be here."

Judging from a shudder he saw pervade Teresa as she glanced at the cord, he imagined her courage was upon the point of failing. "Once more," he said to her, "give me an answer, and accept my offer of assistance. Promise me you will; if not for your own sake, cast one thought of pity on me. Imagine what my feelings would be, condemned to stand here and witness your suffering under the terrible torture to which you will be subjected.

Hark! I hear footsteps in the corridor. One moment longer, and it will be too late. Dearest Teresa, you must feel some pity for me. Little did I know, till I judged from what I witnessed last evening, that you held for me any affection. Speak quickly, I hear the footsteps approaching."

The effect of his speech was far different from what might have been imagined. Great as her dread was at the entrance of the Inquisitors into the room, it was absorbed in her shame at finding her unworthy lover had discovered the secret of her affection for him. The sound of the steps became more clearly distinguishable in the stone passage leading to the room, and Brother Felix, with the energy of despair, advanced towards her to take her hand, imploring her at the same time to speak. To avoid, not only his touch, but the sound of his words, she sank on one knee, and bending her head, placed her hands over her ears to shield herself from

his arguments, and as she did so, she heard him exclaim, "Too late! too late!" and the door opened.

Terror at the arrival of the Inquisitors was now added to her desire not to hear the persuasive arguments of Brother Felix, and she tenaciously remained crouched in the same position, taking no notice of the new comers. In this way she continued for some moments, hearing nothing, when a hand was placed on her shoulder with great tenderness. Fearing the hand was that of Brother Felix, she shrank from it, when on the other side of her she felt an arm placed gently round her waist, and a hand, evidently a woman's, take her softly by the wrist. Teresa now let her hands fall from her ears, when a man's voice, in kind accents, said—

"Come, my daughter; have courage. Do not be alarmed."

"Teresa, my child," said a kind female voice, well known to her, "rise up; you

have nothing to fear. We have come to take you with us."

Teresa now, with the assistance of the arm which had been placed round her, rose from her knees, and gazed with astonishment at those near her. On one side, with real kindness and sympathy expressed on his countenance, stood the Jesuit Pelletario, on the other, Madonna Bonifazio, the governess of the Princesses, a lady who had always felt, notwithstanding the difference of their creed, a marked affection for the beautiful and amiable heretic girl. Completely bewildered, Teresa had great difficulty in realizing the position she was in. Madonna Bonifazio, seeing her surprise and confusion, came to her assistance, and clasping her in her arms, kissed her affectionately, and said—

"My child, recover yourself, for we have come to take you with us. His Highness, having heard where you were, has sent an order for your release, and the Duchess has

sent her carretta for you, which is now waiting below."

Teresa, through the kindness of Madonna Bonifazio, somewhat recovered herself; but the presence of the Syndaco, who was also standing there, appeared still to keep her in doubt. Noticing the inquiring look she cast on him, the Syndaco said to her—

"It is quite true." Then showing her a piece of parchment, he continued, "It is perfectly true. I have this morning had the happiness to receive the order for your release, signed by his Highness himself. Here it is."

Before answering a word, Teresa glanced round the room, and saw Brother Felix standing near the window, apparently occupied in looking at something which was taking place below. At that moment the Dominican monk, who had acted as Oriz's secretary the evening before, and a lay brother of the order entered the room.

The secretary appeared greatly surprised to see Pelletario, and although the two monks saluted each other with the greatest courtesy and humility, evidently but little affection existed between them.

“Excuse me, my brother,” said the Dominican, noticing that Pelletario and Madonna Bonifazio, in company with Teresa, were about leaving the room, “Excuse me, but is there not some little mistake in your removing a prisoner in custody of the Holy Office?”

The Jesuit, with great blandness in his manner, but a certain expression of triumph in his countenance, possibly indicating that he was master of the position, replied to the Dominican—

“I think, my Reverend Brother, that our proceedings are perfectly regular. The prisoner was first arrested on a charge of having broken the sanitary laws of the city, nor am I aware that any charge of heresy

has been formally entered against her. Is not that so, worthy Syndaco?"

"She was first arrested on the charge of breaking the sanitary regulations," replied the Syndaco.

"And was till a moment since," Pelletario continued, laying particular expression on the last words, "a prisoner of the civil authority?"

"Quite true, Reverend Father," said the Syndaco.

"And you have also the order for her immediate release, signed by his Highness the Duke?"

"I have, Reverend Father ; it is true."

"Show it to my Reverend Brother." Then turning to the Dominican, he said, "You will see that we are perfectly in order. Should, however, any little irregularity unwittingly have occurred, the Fathers of the Holy Office have but to

apply to his Highness, who, as a true son of the Church, will give any communication he receives from such a quarter his profound attention. Will you excuse me, Reverend Brother, if I leave you? Her Highness is expecting us."

Notwithstanding his great command of feature, the Dominican secretary could not conceal his surprise at the Jesuit's words. Making an effort to recover himself, he said—

"Good morning, my Reverend Brother. Of course it will be my duty to inform his Reverence the Chief Inquisitor of what has taken place."

"By all means, Brother," said Pelletario, with great suavity in his tone. "Pray inform him of all, that no mistake may hereafter arise from any concealment." And politely making room for Madonna Bonifazio, who was supporting Teresa, to go before them, he bowed obsequiously to the Dominican, and then changing the ex-

pression of his countenance with great rapidity, he cast one glance of intelligence mixed with stern displeasure, on Brother Felix, and left the room.

They now descended into the courtyard of the Palace of Justice, where the splendid carretta of the Duchess was standing, to carry them the short distance from thence to the Este Palace. The officials in the courtyard, as well as the servants in attendance to hand them into the carretta, could not help, notwithstanding their habitual good training, casting a curious and anxious glance at the poor girl who a few minutes before had been about to undergo the torture, and who now was being escorted as a guest to the Ducal Palace by the two persons of the highest importance in the Duchy—the confessor to the Duke, and the lady superintendent of his daughters. With some little difficulty they placed the trembling girl into the carretta; Madonna Bonifazio then took her

seat by her side, and Pelletario opposite to them. The servants having drawn the curtains, the coachman drove on at a walking pace, a footman on each side of the carretta, and two of the ducal guard preceding it to the Este Palace.

Teresa, on her way, turned towards Madonna Bonifazio, and said—

“Am I then to be imprisoned with her Highness?”

“Imprisoned with her Highness!” said Madonna Bonifazio. “My dear child, you are now in perfect liberty, and the guest both of her Highness and the Duke. The Princesses have also again returned to Ferrara, and will be delighted to welcome their friend. Come, my child, look gay again. Be assured you will receive a most cordial welcome.”

Pelletario also put in his word of consolation, and explained to her the great satisfaction, not only her Highness the Duchess, but also the Duke and the young

Princesses, would have in again seeing her.

“I assure you,” he continued, “we have all been deeply grieved at the inconveniences and sorrows which, through a current of untoward events, you have unavoidably been subjected to. But all is now over. Be prepared to meet her Highness with a cheerful countenance.”

By this time the carretta had arrived at the Este Palace, and Teresa, accompanied by Madonna Bonifazio and the Jesuit, mounted the grand staircase leading to the magnificent apartments which had been ornamented in the time of the late Duke, and they continued their way onward till they had nearly arrived at a small private cabinet of his wife, the late Duchess Lucrezia Borgia, and which was rich in paintings from the pencil of Raphael, Fra Bartolomeo, Garofolo, and Dosso Dossi, as well as the most exquisite specimens of art

from the chisel of Benvenuto Cellini. On nearly arriving at the door of this cabinet, Pelletario, with great good taste, said to Madonna Bonifazio—

“Would it not be better that we allowed the first interview between her Highness and our friend Teresa to pass without witnesses?”

“I perfectly agree with you,” said Madonna Bonifazio, and they then continued with her to the door, which an usher opened, and the next moment Teresa found herself in the presence of her illustrious patroness.

Teresa immediately rushed forward, and was on the point of flinging herself on her knees, and taking the hand of the Duchess, who withdrew it, and placing it before her eyes wept for some moments in silence.

“Oh, my child!” she said, “how degraded does your presence make me appear in my own eyes!” Then placing her arm

round Teresa she embraced her tenderly. Looking at her attentively for a moment, she continued, " You little know to what depths I have fallen, and the sin I have committed."

CHAPTER IV.

RENÉE'S FALL.



WE must now pause in the course of our narrative to explain the discrepancy apparent in the information Teresa had received of the imprisonment and cruel treatment of the Duchess Renée and the perfect liberty she appeared to enjoy at the time of their meeting. To do this the more distinctly, it will be necessary to retrace our narrative to the time when Teresa and Madonna Ponte had quitted the Palace of San Francesco to obtain tidings respecting the pastor Bernardino Ochino, her Highness being anxious to know whether he had effected his escape.

The reader will remember, that at the interview between the inquisitor Oriz and Renée, prior to Ochino quitting the Palace, Renée, strong in her own faith, set at defiance the threats of the Inquisitor, and called upon Teresa and Madonna Ponte, who were then present, to bear witness of her statement, that no persecution or entreaties should terrify or persuade her into a renunciation of the Protestant faith. Little, however, did the unfortunate Duchess appreciate at the moment how terrible was the power which would be brought to bear against her. Oriz, when he heard her words, merely bowed, as indicating that he fairly understood her meaning, and it remained only a question between them which should be the stronger, and he then quitted her presence. But notwithstanding the confidence Renée possessed in the stability of her own principles—and few indeed could have possessed stronger courage to defend the

Protestant faith than she had, or greater willingness to suffer death in its cause—a power still greater was in the hands of Oriz.

The profound knowledge of human nature Oriz had acquired during his long experience in the office of Inquisitor—a knowledge in the present instance turned to such infamous account, that even the most bigoted panegyrist of the Inquisition has never dared to say one word in its defence—had taught him that there existed a means of crushing the spirit of the Duchess, and that by mental torture, applied to the most honourable attributes a woman can possess. And his plans resulted in a success which constrained the unfortunate lady for a period—and but for a short period—to quit the Protestant faith, though at the same time he covered his own name, if not that of the Inquisition itself, with well-merited opprobrium.

For perhaps half an hour after Teresa

and Madonna Ponte had quitted the Palace of San Francesco, Renée remained seated in the room she had occupied prior to their departure. She sat motionless in her chair, labouring under that peculiar and inexplicable oppression with which a present misfortune is aggravated by the uncertainty whether it may not increase in intensity. She was aware that the Princesses, not only without bidding her adieu, but without her knowledge, had quitted the Palace, but whether for a short period, or that she had been permanently deprived of their society, was a point on which she was still uncertain, although, without any positive reason to go upon, she anticipated the latter.

The Duchess was aroused from her meditations by the entrance of her gentleman usher into the room, who with terror stamped on his countenance, informed her that the Archbishop of Ferrara, attended by a reverend brother of the Dominican

order, and a captain of the Ducal Guard, had arrived at the Palace, and demanded an audience with her Highness. The Duchess, greatly surprised at the usher's manner, and possibly feeling indignant at the somewhat imperative wording of his message, although it was delivered with the most profound respect, was on the point of returning an answer that it was not convenient for her at that moment to receive them, when the Dominican (who was no other than the one who had acted as secretary at Teresa's examination), with the Archbishop and captain of the guard, entered the apartment. The Archbishop and the monk advanced with much respect in their manner, and sympathy in their faces, towards the Duchess, while the captain of the guard, after ordering the usher to withdraw, closed the door, and in a respectful attitude stood by it, as if unwilling it should be thought that he was

in any way a party to the conference about to take place.

Renée, when she saw her visitors enter, seemed about to protest against their intrusion, but the air of sorrow visible on their countenances, certainly genuine on the part of the Archbishop, and possibly so with the Dominican, restrained her. The Archbishop was the first to break silence.

“We have arrived,” he said, “on a most painful mission to your Highness, one, in fact, which we should never have had the courage to attempt, had it not been that we were impelled by a strong sense of duty on our own parts, and a respectful affection and interest in the soul of your Highness as well. But a further duty still instigates us. The errors professed by your Highness are not only pernicious to your own soul, but by the example you set, to the souls of others, encouraging many to remain in

their heresy who would otherwise have returned to the true Church, as well as impeding the action of the law against them, inasmuch as the equality of justice without distinction of persons, which has hitherto been one of the brightest ornaments in the jurisprudence of our country, cannot fairly be carried out upon those in a lower grade, while your Highness is allowed to retain your own erroneous doctrines with impunity."

"I will not enter into any dispute with you," said Renée, "on theological matters. I am a poor ignorant woman, and my brain in casuistry is little able to compete with a man of your profound experience. But hear me state once for all—that poor as my power of argument may be, and terrible as the power may be which you intend to bring against me, and from the presence of that monk I feel assured that little mercy will be shown me—I intend to remain, and will remain, firm in the Protestant faith.

You may now proceed with your mission. You know my answer."

"Pardon me, your Highness," said the Dominican, "if I assure you that you are in error in the estimate you have formed of the intention of our Reverend Brother the Chief Inquisitor, as well as the other members of our body towards you. We are actuated but by one principle,—that of good feeling. I sincerely trust that, although you may have refused to listen to the arguments of the Reverend Father Oriz, authorized as he was by your royal nephew the King of France, as well as his Highness the Duke to address you, you will, after having reflected on your conduct, withdraw your opposition, so that we may return home with joy in our hearts, instead of being obliged to fulfil the painful ultimatum we are the bearers of should you still determine to persist in the errors of which you are accused."

"May I ask you," said Renée, calmly,

“what the errors I am accused of may be?”

“I am instructed,” said the Dominican, drawing a paper from his pocket, “to read them *seriatim* to your Highness, and to request your answer to each separately. And pleased indeed should I be if I find you deny the truth of all or either.”

“Proceed, sir,” said Renée.

The Dominican then opened his paper and read as follows:—

“By order of the Reverend Fra Matteo Oriz, Chief Inquisitor in Ferrara, I am directed to accuse you, Renée of France and Duchess of Ferrara, of the following crimes, committed by you against the authority of our Holy Church, and to take your answers thereon.

“I. That you have heretically, and with contempt, spoken of the fasts from meat, as well as neglected to observe the feast-days ordered to be kept holy by our Church. Might I have your answer to that accusation?”

"I unhesitatingly admit it to be true," replied Renée.

The Dominican drawing forth a pen, and dipping it in the inkhorn he carried by his side, entered on the paper he was reading Renée's answer to the charge, and then proceeded.

"II. That you have declared the doctrines of our Church to be corrupt, and that you do not believe in the authority of the sovereign Pontiff, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Chief of Rome."

"I admit it," said Renée.

"III. That when holy and learned men have visited you, and with undisputable argument have proved to you that the Roman Catholic Church is the true Church, you have not only denied it, but have spoken in terms of approbation of the doctrines of sacrilegious men, such as John Huss, Martin Luther, and John Calvin.

"IV. That you have brought into Italy

many books, and have afterwards caused them to be translated into Italian at a great cost, the said books containing fearful errors and atrocious blasphemy against the Holy Catholic Church.

“V. That you have permitted persons in your suite to omit reciting the office of the most blessed Virgin Mary, admitting their pretext that as they did not understand Latin, no advantage could be derived from their prayers.

“VI. That you have further spoken against the sacramental confession, and that it was better to confess to God without the intervention of the priesthood.

“VII. In speaking of the adoration of the Holy Virgin and the saints, you have said that adoration should be given to God alone.

“VIII. That you have declared the sacrifice of the mass to be idolatrous and abominable.

“IX. That you have spoken with con-

tempt of the practice of visiting barefooted the shrines of the saints in Paradise."

Several other accusations were also brought against Renée, such as her stating that the Virgin Mary was nothing more than the most honourable among women. That in the sacrament the wafer did not contain the true body and blood of Christ, as well as maintaining that the Popes, in giving authority to the Inquisition to convert, banish, or exterminate heretics, acted with the spirit of demons, and the successors of Cain and Judas.

Renée having unhesitatingly admitted the whole of these accusations, the Dominican then said, with an expression of sorrow in his tone—

"Then, in the name of our Reverend Father Oriz, Chief Inquisitor in the Faith in the Duchy of Ferrara, I arrest you, Renée of France, on the charge of heresy; but, in respect to your rank, I deliver you into the custody of the captain of the

Ducal Guard, who will hold you as a prisoner till your punishment has been decided on."

The officer of the guard now advanced, and with much respect and sorrow in his tone, informed Renée that she must consider herself his prisoner.

"I am ready to obey you, sir," said Renée. "What is it you wish me to do?"

"I must ask your Highness to accompany me to the Castle, where it will be my painful duty to place you in seclusion. A carriage is waiting for you below, so that no time need be lost."

Renée, without hesitation, professed her readiness to follow him, and they descended to the entrance door. Here a numerous body of servants, both Protestant and Catholic, many of them with tears in their eyes, were assembled, and saw her leave the building. She then, with the Archbishop and the Dominican, entered the

caretta, which immediately drove off in the direction of the Castle, escorted by a body of cavalry.

Immediately after the Duchess had quitted the Palace, the whole building was surrounded by soldiers, and several officers of the Inquisition entered it, and commenced the search for Ochino (who, as the reader is aware, had already escaped), while others, at the same moment, were employed in searching the house of Biagio Rosetti. Although neither the Judge nor Ochino were found, the buildings themselves remained in possession of the agents of the Holy Office, there to await the future orders of the head Inquisitor.

The apartments appointed as the prison of Renée in the Castle of Ferrara, consisted of two small plainly-furnished rooms, looking on the courtyard, and opposite the spot where the statue of Leonello formerly stood. Blinds had been prepared in such a manner that she could not see or be seen

from her windows, either from the court below or from the upper apartments of the Castle. On entering the rooms, she was introduced by the captain of the guard to a respectable but stern-looking woman, who was to act as her only servant. The captain of the guard (for the Archbishop and the Dominican had quitted her after escorting her to the prison) then explained to the woman, in the presence of Renée, the duties she was to perform, adding that any omission on her part would be punished with the utmost severity. She was to obey her Highness implicitly in all matters respecting her personal service, but that she was not either to be the means of bringing, or allowing a person to bring, any message, or letter to the Duchess, and that should she notice any disposition on the part of her Highness to disobey the rules given her, she was immediately to give notice to the officer on guard. That when her Highness wished to be alone in the inner

chamber, she was on no account to follow her, or enter it, but to confine herself solely to the outer room. Should she have any communication to make, she could do so by speaking to the sentinel on guard, through the small wicket which had been placed on the door, and through which their food would be furnished, as the door of the prison would only be opened in presence of the captain of the guard, who had possession of the key. Turning to Renée, with great respect in his manner, he begged that she would, through her servant, let him know if there was anything he could do to render her position more comfortable, and that she might be assured, were it not incompatible with his duty, he would immediately obey her. Then, without waiting for Renée's answer, he bowed respectfully to her, and quitted the room.

The moment afterwards the turning of the strong lock outside the door, and the

closing of two bolts, told the unfortunate Duchess but too clearly she was now a prisoner.

Diligently indeed did the emissaries of the Inquisition search through the Palace of San Francesco immediately after Renée had quitted it, for the purpose of arresting Bernardino Ochino, and great indeed was their surprise and disappointment when they found he had escaped. Not only had they received positive information that he was concealed in the Palace, but even the chamber in which he slept had been indicated with such exactitude, that they found several proofs of its having lately been occupied, such as pens, inkhorn, and scraps of manuscript notes which had evidently been written by a minister of religion. These, and a few other proofs that Ochino had escaped, the lay brother in charge took back with him to Oriz. On his arrival at the convent, he met the lay brother under whom the search had been made in the

house of the Judge, and great was the surprise of each to hear their search had been ineffectual. So precise were the instructions the official who had searched the house of the Judge had received, that even the room, as well as the chest, in which the capuchin friar's frock, sandals, and girdle, worn by Ochino, had been pointed out to him.

On informing the head Inquisitor of the unsuccessful result of their mission, the indignation of Oriz for a moment got the better of his habitual coolness, his piercing black eye glaring with passion, as he angrily accused the lay brothers of having neglected their duty. The next moment, however, he regained his self-possession, and curtly excusing himself for his warmth of manner, merely said he had been misinformed, and the lay brothers quitted his presence.

The door had hardly closed on them when Oriz again gave full sway to his

anger. Two elements entered into his disappointment. The unsuccessful termination of his plot to entrap the arch-heretic and renegade monk Bernardino Ochino, and his conviction that he had received notice of the danger which awaited him in sufficient time to allow him to make his escape. A moment's reflection now proved to Oriz that this warning had been conveyed to Ochino, either directly or indirectly, by Pelletario, and he remembered the peculiar expression on the Jesuit's countenance when he informed him, as they were proceeding together from the Convent of the Corpus Domini to the Este Palace on their visit to the Duke, of the strong probability of Ochino's soon being in his hands. Oriz now translated that expression as a determination on the Jesuit's part to give Ochino, his former friend, notice of the danger he was in; and the annoyance of Oriz was still further increased from the fact that he entertained

a greater jealousy of Pelletario than of all men living, who, as the Duke's confessor, divided with him the supreme power he himself aimed at in the direction of the ecclesiastical affairs of the Duchy. Like most men slowly roused to passion, Oriz was a long time in subduing his feeling, and even after mature reflection had showed him the inutility, if not impolicy, of allowing himself to be driven from his usual calm, his anger against the Jesuit Pelletario continued unabated.

Strong as the anger of Oriz remained against his rival the Jesuit, it in no way impeded him in carrying out his plot against the Duchess. He fully saw the value that her conversion would be to the Church of Rome, as proving that no dignity was so high or powerful as to be above its control. She would also by her recantation induce others in Ferrara to follow her example, and thus save the Inquisition a great amount of labour, and

possibly obloquy, for ruthless as he was he had still sufficient discretion to perceive that it was better for the interests of the Church that heresy should be subdued with as little appearance of force as possible, beyond what was necessary for example, as the populace of Ferrara, naturally not of a cruel disposition, might revolt at the too frequent exhibition of punishment.

Oriz now commenced systematically to break down the spirit of the Duchess, and in this he might possibly have been instigated by the challenge she had given him, that no power he could use should induce her to prove faithless to her creed. The mind of Renée was too much bewildered on the day of her arrival at the Castle, at the indignity offered her, thoroughly to estimate how completely she was in the power of the Inquisitor. The following day, however, she had good proof of it. Determining to submit with patience to

the injustice practised on her, she the next morning told the woman in attendance on her to request that the Bible and different books of devotion which had been left behind in the Palace of San Francesco might be sent to her. The woman conveyed the message to the guard, who in his turn gave it to his superior officer, who communicated it to the Inquisitors. It was some hours before Renée received any reply to her demand. A messenger then arrived from the Dominican Convent informing her that the books she required having been examined by the officials of the Holy Office, they were found to be heretical, and as such ordered to be immediately destroyed. The messenger continued, that the Reverend Father Oriz, Chief Inquisitor, out of an earnest wish for the welfare of the soul of the misguided Duchess, had forwarded her several Catholic books of devotion, which he trusted she would read and profit by.

It need hardly be said that Renée indignantly refused to receive the books sent to her by Oriz. Her anger, as it subsided, allowed her to see the deplorable condition she was in, deprived as she was, not only of her Bible, on which she set great store, but of several Protestant devotional works which she highly prized, and among them one which had been dedicated to her by John Calvin himself. She now devoutly prayed that God would support her under her afflictions, and give her strength to bear with patience whatever might be ordained for her. But here she found a new source of torture had been prepared for her. On more than one occasion the woman in attendance on her had interrupted her—respectfully enough it is true—in her prayers, and advised her to use those practised by members of the Romish faith.

The third day from her incarceration, the door was opened by the captain of the

guard in person, and the chief Inquisitor entered the room.

Renée received him with stern dignity, and asked upon what authority he intruded himself into her presence.

“Pardon me, your Highness,” said Oriz with great calmness, “I am sorry if my visit is disagreeable. At the same time allow me to remind you that for the present, and I trust for a very short time longer, our relative positions are somewhat changed. It is my duty alone which has induced me to visit you, and humbly and earnestly to implore you to listen to the arguments which I shall bring forward to prove to you how injurious, not only to your own soul, but to those of your subjects to whom you set an example, is your present perverse behaviour.”

“Once more, sir,” said Renée, “I tell you I will hear no arguments you have to produce. I am resolved, as I told you when first we met, to remain true to my

faith, and bitterly as I may feel the cruelty you have practised on me in taking from me my children, I trust God will give me power to support it. For imprisonment I care but little, at the same time you would oblige me by requesting the attendant you have placed over me not to interfere with me or interrupt me in my devotions. If I am not likely to succumb to your arguments, it is not probable that those of an uneducated though good-meaning woman will have any effect on me."

"I much regret, madam," said Oriz with great politeness, "she should in any manner have inaptly interfered with your devotions. I trust you will pardon her, as she meant well. At the same time I promise you that this evening she shall be removed. I will now leave your Highness, and hope the next time I visit you to find you in a better frame of mind."

Oriz now left the room, and about two hours afterwards the door again opened,

and a woman of mature age, and in the dress of a nun, entered the prison, stating that she had been sent by the Reverend Father Oriz to remain with her Highness in place of the person to whom she had objected. Renée, at sight of the nun's costume, easily perceived that it was merely a continuation of the system of persecution to which she was to be subjected. Considering it beneath her to complain, she received the nun's salutation with quiet courtesy, and the woman who had hitherto been Renée's companion left the room, and the door was immediately closed and fastened.

Renée now examined her new companion somewhat attentively. Although the gloom of bigotry seemed stamped upon her face, there was at the same time upon it an expression of great intelligence, not unmixed with kindness. Her voice, too, when she spoke, was clear and sympathetic. In fact, so pleasing were her manners, that in a

short time a considerable degree of repugnance which Renée felt on first seeing her, vanished. The nun during the first day spoke not one word on religious subjects, or alluded in any way to Renée's imprisonment, behaving to her the while with the same courteous respect she would have shown had the Duchess been at liberty.

When they retired to their separate couches for the night, the nun not only did not attempt to disturb Renée in her devotions, but performed her own so quietly and unobtrusively as to be unnoticed by the Duchess. The next morning, with the exception that she found a small crucifix and a cup of holy water placed over the nun's bed, nothing in the slightest manner was to be objected to in the behaviour of her companion. The Duchess by degrees began to feel interested in her, and the nun, without the least attempt to thrust her conversation on Renée, willingly

spoke on any subject broached by her Highness.

The two following days passed over without any visit from Oriz, the nun the while continuing to increase in Renée's favour, so much so in fact, that several times she had spoken of her imprisonment, the harshness she had experienced at the hands of the Inquisitor, and the sorrow she felt at being separated from her daughters. When the latter subject was touched on, the nun showed great feeling, and strongly sympathized with Renée, saying that she had been married herself before she became a nun, and had two daughters, both of whom had died, and she could easily imagine how great must be the sorrow of the Duchess at being parted from her children, especially under such painful circumstances.

The next visit of Oriz was of even shorter duration than the former. At it Renée implored him to give her some information

respecting her daughters, where they were, and when they would be permitted to visit her.

"I profoundly regret," said Oriz, "that I cannot obey your Highness, either in allowing your daughters to visit you, or in giving you any information respecting them. Much as I may grieve for the sorrow their absence causes you, it is my duty to watch over the welfare of their souls."

"But, sir, they are my daughters," said Renée, indignantly, "and upon what right does your Church pretend to separate parent from child?"

"Your Highness is in error," said Oriz, emphatically. "In the eyes of God they are not your children. You are suffering under the greater excommunication of the Church, which imperatively separates the relationship existing between a parent excommunicated for heresy, and a child still a member of the only true Church."

Renée looked at him sternly for a moment, and then said—

“And can a Church which will claim such a power be entitled to the respect of any woman in whose heart God has placed the natural affection which exists between a parent and a child? Leave my presence, sir. Oh! never till this moment did I feel the loss of my power as a Princess, that I might order you indignantly to be cast forth for using in my presence so blasphemous a remark!”

Oriz appeared totally impassive to the anger of the Duchess, and bowing respectfully to her, calmly left the room.

For the remainder of the day little conversation passed between the nun and Renée; but on the following, the spirit of the poor Duchess broke down when speaking to the nun of the sorrow she experienced in being separated from her children, and she wept bitterly. The nun appeared to

sympathize with her ; but, at the same time, could not admit her statement to be correct, that the Church had not the power of separating a child from an excommunicated parent. And yet these objections to Renée's remarks were made with so much gentleness and persuasiveness on the part of the nun, that Renée listened to them without the anger she would have felt had they been uttered in the sterner manner of Oriz.

On the Inquisitor's next visit Renée insisted upon the right of seeing her daughters, stating that if it were further refused she would appeal to the Duke her husband, who, she felt convinced, would not allow her longer to be deprived of the society of her children. In reply, Oriz calmly told her that his Highness, like a true son of the Church, had willingly submitted to her authority ; that he had placed the whole subject in the hands of the Holy Office, promising not in any manner to

interfere with them in the painful duties they had to perform, and his Highness had most faithfully kept his word. He would not disguise from the Duchess that her husband suffered bitterly from her obstinacy, still, like a soldier of the cross, remained faithful to the pledge he had given. Renée then inquired how long her imprisonment was to endure.

“To perpetuity, unless your Highness repents and again becomes a member of our Church.”

“Are my daughters then taught,” said Renée, “to consider me as dead to them?”

“Unfortunately worse,” replied Oriz. “They are being taught to consider you, not only as dead, but unworthy of respect so long as your Highness shall continue in your present frame of mind. Still, with the charity which our Church inculcates on her children, they are permitted to pray that you may be released from the bonds

of Satan in which you are now bound, and again become a faithful member of our Church."

For some days afterwards Renée continued overwhelmed with terror at the threat of Oriz, that she would never again on earth be allowed to see her children, at the same time treating with contempt that portion of it which indicated that they should not meet in heaven. Again, the idea that her daughters were being educated to hold their mother in aversion, told most painfully on the poor Duchess, and the more so as she was now deprived of her Bible, or any other work of consolation to which she might apply in her distress. Meanwhile the nun, from time to time, pointed out to her the fact that each day her daughters were separated from her, the stronger would their aversion become to the errors she had fallen into, and proportionately their love for her would decrease.

It now became evident that the mind of Renée was sinking under the persecution she was suffering, and which was all the greater from the intense love which had hitherto existed between her and her children.* Her anxiety and agitation continued to increase, and they were skilfully fanned by the nun in attendance on her. Renée now gave way to alternate fits of depression and excitement, till at last she appeared almost bewildered. One morning when she left her room, although she maintained her dignified demeanour, there was on her countenance an expression of stern determination. Without answering the nun's inquiries as to whether she had slept well, she told her to request the attendance of the Father Pelletario. The nun was at first startled at her words, but recovering herself, she asked whether

* See Note, page 132.

her Highness would not prefer seeing the Reverend Father Oriz.

“My words were,” said Renée, imperiously, “that I wished to see the Father Pelletario. Let me be obeyed.”

The nun, without further hesitation, gave the order to the sentinel outside the door, and Renée then retired into her private room, to await the arrival of the Jesuit Father. He was shown into her room, where he remained with her but a few moments and then left it, saying that he would shortly return. He did so soon afterwards, and in company with the Duke, and they both entered Renée’s private room.

“I have the happiness to inform your Highness,” said Pelletario, “that the Duchess has seen the error of the doctrine she had adopted, and is again a member of our Holy Catholic Church.”

Renée, still in a feverish state of excitement, said—

“True, I am a Catholic,” and then immediately afterwards added, “but no papist.”*

Pelletario was too proud of his success to make any objection to the last remark—in fact, he pretended not to hear it. In the afternoon of the same day Renée confessed and attended mass in the private chapel at the Palace. In the evening the Princesses returned to Ferrara, and affectionate indeed was the meeting between the Duchess and her daughters. Indeed, so great was Renée’s joy, that at the moment it seemed to have obliterated from her mind the recantation she had made. The Duke, on his part, behaved with great kindness and amiability to his wife and daughters, and the evening passed off in the family circle as happily for Renée as, under existing circumstances, might have been expected.

* Her words were—“*Io sono Cattolico ma non Romano.*”

NOTE. Page 129.—Notwithstanding the difference in their creeds, an intense affection always existed between Renée and her daughters. Anna, the eldest, wife of the bigoted Duke of Guise, even after Renée had again abjured the Catholic faith, and having returned to France, acted as protectress of the persecuted Protestants, continued faithfully attached to her heretic mother. Her daughter Eleanora, who died young, and whose name is so frequently mentioned in connexion with the unhappy passion of the poet Tasso, showed by a codicil in her will the affection she entertained for her mother to the last. Among many legacies bequeathed to different religious corporations, as well as to her friends, she left to ‘Madame de Ferrara, her mother, an emerald brooch, as being of her worldly goods the object she most highly prized’—“*Come cosa più cara che habbia.*” The brooch had formerly been a present from Renée to her daughter.

CHAPTER V.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.



AFTER the first burst of emotion caused by her meeting Teresa had somewhat subsided, Renée related to her the events which had occurred since she had seen her, and which were principally given in the last chapter. For some time Renée attempted to offer excuses for her recantation, but she succeeded so indifferently that Teresa easily perceived she was unable to admit in her own mind the very arguments she was using to convince her listener—that she was less in fault than at first sight she appeared to be. When the Duchess had concluded, both remained silent for some moments,

Renée seeming dissatisfied with the excuses she had made in her own defence, while Teresa neither liked to admit them, nor to say anything that might wound the feelings of her kind mistress. Suddenly Renée burst out with—

“Teresa, my child, do not let the arguments I have used hold me excused in your mind for my recantation, for I am myself convinced of their unsoundness; still pity me, for I am worthy of it. I am a mother and tenderly attached to my children, and the affection I bear them is, though it was contrary to my own belief, greater than my attachment to the Protestant creed. The Chief Inquisitor cunningly detected my weak point, and tortured me on it with so much cruelty, that at last my courage broke down under the anguish I was enduring. I renounced my faith that I might again have the happiness of clasping my dear children to my heart. May God forgive me the sin I have com-

mitted! He is all merciful and may have compassion on me. The bodily torture with which I was at first threatened, I could have supported, though probably, after the weakness I have now shown, you may think I should have failed even then. Possibly I might have been able to withstand the separation from my children, but when, day by day, I was told they were being systematically taught to hold me in aversion, and that each lesson they received appeared to take firmer root in them, they must be cruel indeed who could not look with some pity on my fault!"

"But surely," said Teresa, "your Highness is not a Catholic in your heart?"

"No, child," said the Duchess, rising from her seat, her countenance wearing an expression of great determination; "no, child, a warmer Protestant than I am in my heart does not exist in Ferrara, and in that faith I will continue even though I feel degraded in my own mind at the

duplicity I am practising. And if I feel degraded in my own eyes, what must I be in the eyes of others! This is more than I can bear! To-morrow, or the following day at the latest, I shall leave Ferrara for Belriguardo, where for the future I shall reside, so that I may be screened as much as possible from public observation, and,—in the eyes of all good Protestants—execration. And now, my child, tell me how you have fared since I last saw you.”

Teresa now succinctly related to the Duchess the different adventures she had met with. How she and Madonna Ponte had heard the proclamation denouncing as heretics all the attendants of her Highness, and had afterwards been conducted by a stranger to the house of the blind widow, and of the illness of Madonna Ponte. She then described the manner in which she had heard from Gerolamo of the place of her father's concealment, her subsequent

imprisonment and adventures with the Inquisitors, all of which she narrated with great clearness, with the exception of the episode with Fra Felix, which she smoothed over considerably. Teresa next expressed her anxiety respecting her father, and she begged the Duchess to obtain for her, if possible, some information concerning him, for if he once fell into the hands of the Inquisitors, little mercy would be shown him.

“Depend upon it, my child,” said the Duchess, “immediate inquiries shall be made respecting him, and every protection afforded him. I will speak to his Highness on the subject, who, I am sure, will at present willingly grant me any request I may make. I have no doubt he will without difficulty be able to quit the territory, for it would be too dangerous for him to remain here.”

“But,” said Teresa, “possibly he may be already arrested, and if so, he will certainly be condemned to death.”

“Admitting he were arrested,” said Renée, “I think, Teresa, as in your case, the power of the Duke is quite strong enough to release him. But now tell me what intelligence have you heard of the Pastor Ochino?”

Teresa replied, that during her imprisonment she had more than once heard from those confined with her, that it was reported Ochino had effected his escape into the Venetian territories, but beyond that she knew nothing.

“Neither do I,” said the Duchess. “Indeed I know nothing of what has taken place during my imprisonment in the Castle; and Teresa,” she continued, speaking slowly and emphatically, while the tears gathered in her eye, “I dread to inquire. I feel a certainty that terrible deeds of cruelty have been done, and I unable to protect those that suffered! I dread making an inquiry, lest I should hear that those whom I loved and respected have

perished, or, as in my own case, under either bodily or mental torture, have shown themselves no true soldiers of the Cross. All my consolation is, that now, at liberty, I shall be better able, even though but occasionally, to succour those suffering for conscience' sake, than I was when immured in the walls of my prison; and my first effort, Teresa, shall be to protect your father. I expect the Duke will shortly arrive, and I will speak to him on the subject."

After a little more conversation, Madonna Bonifazio entered the room, and inquired whether it would please her Highness to receive the Princesses. Renée having expressed her willingness to do so, Madonna Bonifazio retired, and in a few minutes returned in company with the Princesses Lucrezia and Eleanora, who, before paying their respects to their mother, advanced towards Teresa, and each in turn kissed her affectionately. They afterwards drew her

aside and conversed with her with great animation, evidently doing all in their power to impress on her the pleasure they felt in seeing her again at liberty and with them. In a short time his Highness entered the room, and welcomed Teresa with great cordiality and gallantry. When he had said a few words of encouragement and kindness to her, the Duchess told him she wished to speak a few words to him in private, and the Princesses and Madonna Bonifazio retired to another part of the room.

“I have a great favour to ask your Highness,” said Renée, “and I trust you will grant it me.”

“It would be difficult to imagine a favour which you could ask, and which I would not grant,” said the Duke, “and all the more readily if it should in any way concern our pretty heretic friend here.”

“It is a subject of greater interest to her even than to me,” said Renée,

“for it relates to the safety of her own father.”

The Duke, putting aside the gallant tone in which he had hitherto spoken, said with a serious voice to Teresa—

“And is your father at present in Ferrara?”

Teresa remained silent, and turned with an expression of alarm to Renée, as if meekly appealing to her for support. The Duke understood her, and continued—

“Nay, my child, you need be under no alarm. I assure you I have no feelings adverse to your father. On the contrary, much as I regret his religious views, I have a profound respect for his integrity and learning. In every way he has proved himself an upright judge, and a more honoured character—always excepting those of the sacred profession—it would be difficult to imagine. He is, however, I am sorry to say, accused of having harboured in his

house the ex-General of the Capuchins, and assisted him in escaping."

The Duke here stopped for a moment as if some difficulty presented itself to his mind.

"But how is it," he said, after a moment's silence, "that your father should be at present in Ferrara, as I conclude from what you say he is, and Ochino escaped, when so great an intimacy existed between them? Nay, more, we have reason to believe that they both left Ferrara together, and it would hardly be likely that they separated. Should your father be found in company with Ochino, even my power to protect him might possibly be in vain."

"I think I can easily explain the matter," said Renée. "The Count Biagio Rosetti has evidently returned to Ferrara to protect his child."

"Well," said the Duke, "I must admit the reason appears to be a good one. Be assured, Teresa, in that case I will do all in my power to protect him."

Then turning to an usher, the Duke told him to request the immediate attendance of the captain of the guard. The usher left the room and shortly afterwards returned with the captain.

“Of course,” said the Duke to him, “you know the features of the Judge Biagio Rosetti, and would recognise him when you see him?”

“Certainly, your Highness,” said the captain.

“He is at present,” said the Duke, “in Ferrara. I wish you to find him out, and though treating him with every mark of respect, conduct him as under arrest to the Belvedere Palace, where you will see that everything is prepared for his accommodation, and that he is treated in every way consistent with his safe custody, so far as his not quitting the Palace is concerned. That done, let it be reported without loss of time to me personally, and you will bear in mind that I wish the utmost secrecy to be observed in the whole affair.”

“Your Highness shall be obeyed,” said the captain. “But as great secrecy is to be observed, I had better, I suppose, make the arrest after dark. At the same time I am not aware where the Count resides.”

“True,” said the Duke, “I had forgotten that.” Then turning to Teresa (who was at the time talking to the young Princesses), he told her to inform the captain of the guard where her father was at present residing.

With some little difficulty Teresa described the position of the cabin the blind widow lived in, and the captain of the guard immediately left on his mission, promising he would report to his Highness in the evening all that had taken place, and Teresa, with a lighter heart than she had experienced for some time past, spent the remainder of the afternoon in the society of the Ducal family.

We must now return to the Judge Biagio

Rosetti, who, as the reader is aware, since he had quitted the house of Giacomo the ferryman, remained concealed under the roof of the blind widow. And happy indeed was the poor woman to afford him all the protection and shelter in her power, which were in the present instance perhaps greater than had he remained a guest of the proudest noble in Ferrara. From time to time Giacomo, the ferryman, after the labours of the day were over, brought him news of what was taking place in Ferrara. It was some days, however, after Teresa's arrest before her father was aware of the fact. True, Giacomo had heard of it from his friend Gerolamo, but as the latter did not seem quite certain on the subject, the boatman, rightly judging that ill news always arrives too soon, thought it better to conceal it from the Judge. The lull in the plague which afterwards occurred confined Gerolamo to the Boschetto, so that he had no opportunity of giving further

information to Giacomo; and as since a strict quarantine had been established against the entrance into Ferrara of those living in the suburbs, as well as the difficulty the citizens experienced from the police regulations in quitting it, he had great difficulty in obtaining any certain information.

At last, in consequence of the quarrel which took place between Carlo Pedretti and the Becca-morti, who, as the reader will remember, expelled him from their society, some definite information was obtained on the subject. The Becca-morti had taunted Pedretti on his having played the spy, and Pedretti in return told them, that at any rate he should be better paid for having done so than the remuneration the whole of them would receive together for the services they had performed. Whether Pedretti was really aware that Teresa, at the time, was still imprisoned, or that he merely said it at hazard by way of

annoying them, is doubtful. Most probably the latter conclusion would be the correct one. But at the same time it had the effect of authenticity on the mind of Gerolamo, and, in the evening, having obtained leave of absence, he took the opportunity of seeking his friend Giacomo, and after due deliberation on the subject, they agreed to tell the Judge the truth, and both went to the cottage of the blind widow for that purpose.

The terror of the Judge on hearing the danger of his daughter was great indeed. Fortunately, however, his informants omitted to state, even if they were themselves aware of the fact, that she had been arrested on the double charge of heresy and a breach of the sanitary laws. He therefore found, after his first burst of sorrow was over, some consolation in the idea that as the plague was now subsiding, in all probability her incarceration would

be but temporary, and that he should soon again behold her.

Day after day now passed over without the Judge receiving any news of his daughter, and his anxiety, in proportion with the delay, became the more cruel. Several times he was upon the point of attempting to disguise himself and enter the city at night unknown, but the strict quarantine regulations were still kept up, and all persons passing through the gates had to appear not only before the sanitary officer, but the inspector of police. Not that there was, in a medical point of view, the slightest need of this rigorous and vexatious system being maintained, the plague having completely subsided, but it was kept up at the request of the Inquisition, so that under the veil of a beneficial sanitary regulation, a police inspection for the detection of denounced heretics might be carried on with undiminished energy, though at the same time with that vigilance

which seemed one of the distinctive characteristics of the operations of the Inquisition in Ferrara.

Again, both Gerolamo and Giacomo strenuously advised him against making any attempt of the kind. They reminded him that a heavy price had been set on his head, and fortunate indeed the spy would consider himself who discovered him.

Rosetti could not close his eyes to the justice of their arguments, and even further considered that were he detected, and his arrest became known to his daughter, it might lead to her death as well as his own. He remembered that Gerolamo had informed Teresa of his being in Ferrara, and he rightly judged that the very impunity he possessed was a proof that his daughter had refused to inform her judges where he might be found, even if they were aware she was possessed of the secret. He concluded from it, also, that her imprison-

ment could not be conducted with any extreme severity, and he at last determined to submit to his present concealment rather than hazard an appearance in the city, where, should he be detected, setting aside his own punishment, it might be most prejudicial to his daughter.

Several days passed over, Rosetti the while summoning up all the philosophy he was possessed of, to endure the cruel anxiety he felt respecting his child, and that anxiety becoming the greater with each succeeding day that passed over his head. At length the uncertainty became insupportable, and he once more determined to make the attempt to enter the city.

One evening when the temptation had been particularly strong upon him, and after Giacomo, with whom he had been in conversation on the subject, and who had earnestly entreated him not to make so rash an attempt, had left him, the door suddenly

opened, and a man entered the room. After casting a glance around him, as if to ascertain who were present, he said to some one outside the house, "Remain there till I want you."

"He then closed the door, and advancing to the Judge, who, being seated with his back to him, had not seen him enter, said to him, with much courtesy in his tone—

"Count Biagio Rosetti, I am ordered by his Highness the Duke to arrest you. You must consider yourself my prisoner."

For a moment Rosetti was too much startled to make any reply, while the blind widow, who was seated at the opposite side of the table, and who had instinctively recognised the presence of a stranger, cried aloud with terror. Recovering from his surprise, Rosetti, who, with the murky light of the lamp, did not recognise the features of the captain of the guard,

partly concealed as they were, as well as his uniform, by a hood and loose capote, replied—

“On what charge am I arrested?—I must also request you to show me your authority for doing so.”

“I am the captain of the Duke’s guard,” said the officer politely, “and am acting directly under his authority. The charge I know not. But be assured of this, in ordering your arrest, his Highness was actuated by no unfriendly feeling towards you. You must be prepared to accompany me, and that without delay, for I was desired by his Highness to report to him after I had fulfilled his orders, and in consequence of the difficulty I had in finding you, it is now late.”

Rosetti easily perceived that any remonstrance would be useless ; and taking a kind and affectionate leave of the poor widow, he told the captain of the guard he was ready to obey him, and they quitted the house together.

On their leaving the house, the two soldiers, who were partly dressed as civilians, followed them, and the captain of the guard, without informing the Judge to what place he was conducting him, continued the road leading to the Belvedere Palace, which then stood between the city walls and the river. On their way thither the Judge made one or two attempts to enter into conversation with his companion, who invariably replied to him, though courteously, either with evasive answers or polite refusals, under the plea that he hardly considered himself at liberty to converse with his prisoner, much as he wished to do so.

“But answer me one question,” said Rosetti at last, “and that for pity’s sake. Tell me if you have heard any intelligence of my poor daughter, who perhaps, as you may know, was one of the ladies-in-waiting on her Highness?”

“I have no reason,” said the officer, after a moment’s reflection, “for objecting to

answer that question, and have much pleasure in assuring you that your daughter is now at liberty, and enjoying the hospitality and protection of her Highness the Duchess."

"Her Highness the Duchess!" said Rosetti with astonishment. "I heard that her Highness had been placed under restraint."

"Your information was perfectly true," replied the captain of the guard. "Her Highness was for some time placed under restraint, but having seen the error of her ways, has again become a member of our Holy Catholic Church, and admitted the authority of his Holiness the Pope as its visible head on earth. The Duchess was then liberated, and is at present residing with the Duke, at the Este Palace, and the Princesses have been restored to her. I saw the young lady, your daughter, in their society this afternoon."

There was for Rosetti both gall and honey

in these words. Happy, indeed, was he to hear that his dear daughter was liberated, and under the protection of the Duchess; but this was strongly qualified with the fear that, following the example of her illustrious mistress, she might also have become a pervert to the Church of Rome. True, he knew her to have been strongly attached to the principles of the Protestant faith, but he could not disguise from himself that she was young and confiding, and therefore more likely to be biassed with the example of one whom she loved and respected as much as she did the Duchess. Then, again, his surprise at the Duchess having recanted, almost for a moment got the better of his alarm, and he began to suspect that the captain of the guard must have been misinformed on the subject.

“Did I clearly understand you,” he said to him, “that her Highness the Duchess has become a convert to the Church of Rome?”

“It is perfectly true,” said the officer ; “but excuse me if I remind you that at the present time it is hardly in accordance with my duty to converse with you on subjects connected with the Palace.”

Rosetti made no further remark, and they continued their way till they had reached the gates of the park which surrounded the Belvedere Palace. The porter who opened them seemed quite prepared for their reception, and had evidently been expecting them. The captain of the guard then conducted his prisoner into the Palace, where they were met by a major domo, who, after receiving Rosetti with great respect, led him, accompanied by the captain of the guard, to the apartments which had been marked out for his reception. After the major domo had pointed out to him the servant who was to wait on him, the captain of the guard said—

“I will now, with your permission, take

my leave, as I must return to the Este Palace to report to his Highness that his orders are accomplished. Till you hear from me again, you may consider yourself at liberty to visit any part of the Palace or grounds you please, but not to stir beyond them. I should also inform you that guards will be placed around the walls to prevent your escape. This I say as being a part of my duty, feeling sure in your case it will be but a matter of form, as you have too much respect to the wishes of his Highness to attempt to break them." So saying, he bowed politely to Rosetti, and quitting the apartment, proceeded at once to the Este Palace.

Rosetti now remained alone with the major domo, who inquired if he had any orders to give for the night. On being assured that nothing would be required, he and the man who had been appointed to wait on the Judge left the room. Rosetti, when left by himself, had some difficulty in

realising his position, so great was the effect, not only of the change of scene from the miserable hovel of the blind widow to his present residence in the magnificent Palace of Belvedere, but especially as regarded his daughter Teresa, whom an hour before he imagined to be incarcerated in the dungeons of the Palazzo della Ragione, and was now an honoured guest at the court of the Duchess, and the intimate friend of the Princesses. But at what price had these extraordinary changes been effected? Could it be that a reward or temptation had induced his dear daughter to change her religion? A thousand times better, were such the case, that she should have remained a prisoner than have sought safety for herself and her father by the sacrifice of her soul's welfare. Still, unflinching Protestant as he was, the same element which had induced the Duchess Renée to consent to the nominal sacrifice of her faith—parental love—mixed itself

up with his thoughts, and in spite of the glory he should have felt had his dear child remained true to her faith, a certain feeling of satisfaction was mingled with it that she was in safety.

Again and again he reflected over the subject. The only hope remaining to him was that the love he knew the Duchess and her children bore Teresa, might possibly have induced them to obtain her release without the sacrifice of her faith, and if so, and he should have the happiness to meet her, earnestly would he beg of her to continue true to her creed in which she had been brought up, and to refuse every temptation, no matter how brilliant and plausible it might appear, to become a convert to the Church of Rome.

Night passed, and the risen sun found Rosetti still a prey to anxiety. After his morning meal, he quitted the Palace to enjoy the fresh breeze as it blew across the river over the Palace grounds, where he

remained for some hours, when a servant approached him, and said that his presence was required in the Palace. Rosetti inquired who wanted him, and was told he did not know, the message having been given him by another servant, but he believed it was the captain of the Duke's guard. Rosetti now returned to the Palace, and entering the apartment which had been assigned him, there found awaiting him his daughter Teresa, accompanied by Madonna Bonifazio. In a moment the parent and child were in each other's arms, and warm and prolonged was their embrace.

"Oh! my dear father," said Teresa, when she had somewhat recovered herself, "how terrible has been my anxiety respecting you!"

"Not more so, my child, than mine has been for you. But, thank God, at last we have met. Is it true that you have been imprisoned?"

“Quite true,” said Teresa. “It was only yesterday I was liberated, and that too, at a moment when I was about to undergo the torture by order of the Inquisition.”

Rosetti, taking his daughter's hand, looked at her anxiously for some moments, as if wishing to put a question, and afraid to ask it. Summoning up courage, he at last said to her, his voice faltering when he spoke—

“Teresa, my child, what price was paid for your liberation?”

“Price, my dear father?” said Teresa, “I hardly understand you. I was liberated by the Duke at the request of her Highness and the Princesses, solely from the love they bore me.”

“Thank God, my child, thank God!” said Rosetti, with a sigh of contentment.

Although Teresa did not understand her father's allusion, Madonna Bonifazio did.

“Yes,” she said to him, “Teresa is right. It was solely from the love they bore her which induced them to demand her liberation. I think I fully understand you. You feared she has become a member of our Holy Church. That she may do so in the end I devoutly wish; but I may tell you that his Highness the Duke has especially ordered that her religion shall not be interfered with, he, like ourselves, hoping that she will by her own good feeling become aware of the truth of our creed. But let me change the conversation,” she continued. “I am directly commissioned, both by his Highness and the Duchess, to advise you to leave Ferrara, and that without delay. You have already been denounced by the Inquisition, and should you fall into their hands a very severe fate might attend you. His Highness proposes that, until you have determined in what part outside the territory you will take up your residence, Teresa should remain under the care of the Duchess,

and with the full assurance that her religion shall not be tampered with. As all your possessions in Ferrara have been confiscated, you may possibly be in want of funds to undertake your journey, and I am directed by her Highness to place this purse in your hands, and to assure you, that when you require more you have but to make known your wish by letter to her, and it shall be forwarded to you. And now will you favour me with your reply to the message?"

Rosetti seemed overjoyed at the intelligence, and willingly accepted the offer of the Duchess that Teresa should remain under her protection, and her religion should not be tampered with, until he was domiciled in some other locality, which he in a moment determined should be Zurich. He told Madonna Bonifazio that he most gratefully thanked the Duchess for her kindness, and accepted it willingly.

Teresa remained for some hours with her

father; in fact, till Madonna Bonifazio reminded her that it was getting near the time for the Princesses to visit their mother. Teresa now took an affectionate farewell of her father, requesting him to write to her on every possible opportunity, and promising that she would herself be a good correspondent. The carretta was then ordered to be in readiness, and after one more long embrace the father and child separated.

Rosetti remained but a short time in solitude after the departure of his daughter, for the captain of the guard entered and asked him whether it were true that he wished to leave the Ferrarese territory. Rosetti told him that it was, and the officer said, in that case the sooner he did so the better; as, strong as the Duke's powers of protection might be, there were other powers in Ferrara scarcely less so, whose cunning and celerity in carrying out their designs was in ordinary cases far superior. Rosetti

readily admitted the truth of the captain's remark that little time was to be lost, and much as he wished once more to see his beloved daughter, he thought it more prudent to relinquish the idea rather than run the danger of falling into the hands of the Inquisition. He then asked the captain of the guard what steps he would advise him to take.

"I must know," he replied, "in what direction you wish to go, and then I shall be much better able to form some plan for your escape."

"My desire," said Rosetti, "is to reach Zurich, as I know that many others of my countrymen are already there."

"I think then your better plan would be to get some one to accompany you, on whose fidelity you could rely. Is there any one you can suggest?"

Rosetti reflected for a moment, and then would have proposed Camille Gurdon, but of him he had been able to obtain no in

formation whatever. He therefore replied that the only person he felt he could trust as an attendant was Giacomo, who, he believed, would willingly go with him.

As Giacomo was a person easily to be found, the captain of the guard sent a messenger to request his attendance without delay, who shortly afterwards returned in company with him. Giacomo entered with great willingness into the idea of accompanying the Judge to Zurich. He could leave his ferry, he said, in charge of his brother-in-law, and possibly after a few months' absence he might be able to return again to Ferrara without being in as much danger as he now felt himself to be.


Although the captain of the guard easily understood his allusion, he made no remark on it, but merely asked Giacomo if he should be willing to start that evening. The ferryman said he should like nothing

better, and after nightfall promised to be with his boat at the landing-place opposite the Palace. He would then ferry the Judge across, and they could continue their course through Mantua to the mountains.

All being now agreed on, Giacomo, left the Palace, and the captain of the guard remained with Rosetti the rest of the day. At night they proceeded together to the river side, where they found Giacomo, true to his appointment, waiting for them. The Judge, after giving the captain many messages to Teresa, bade him a friendly farewell, and the next moment the boat pushed off from the shore.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INQUISITOR ON THE RACK.

T was from ill health alone, and from no lack of interest in the result of Teresa's examination, that Oriz did not attend personally at the Palace of Justice the morning of her liberation by the Duke. He had for several days past been suffering severely. Indeed, it could hardly be said that he enjoyed a day's perfect health from the afternoon Renée had been arrested, and his malady had since gradually increased in severity as time passed on. Of the nature of his malady no one could form an opinion, for he never complained, but bore his infirmity, whatever it might be, with great fortitude.

At last the effects of his illness became so apparent by his more than ordinarily pallid countenance and drooping form, that his brother monks began to be anxious respecting his health. To their inquiries, however, he always replied that nothing ailed him; yet his answers, although always given with courtesy, were remarkable for more than usual brevity, and there was in them an unmistakable tone of anger that hardly encouraged his friends to renew them.

As days passed on his malady appeared to increase in severity, still not one word of complaint did he utter. The pallor in his face also increased, and there was an expression of deep anxiety in it which greatly excited the surprise of his brother monks, as Oriz was somewhat notorious for the extraordinary command he had over his features. Although his Dominican brothers had for some time ceased to ask any questions respecting his health, their

anxiety became stronger as the severity of his symptoms became more perceptible.

One evening when at supper Oriz did not present himself at table as was his wont, a spontaneous conversation arose among the monks on the cause of his absence, which all attributed to ill-health. The indisposition of the Chief Inquisitor was then touched upon, and it seemed the general opinion that although possibly the physical malady might in itself be but of slight importance, the extraordinary attention their Reverend Brother had lately given to the duties of the Holy Office had been more than his constitution could support, and in consequence the physical malady had been greatly intensified. The conversation continued some time, and different members of the Order, each in his turn, brought forward some argument to support the view that had been taken, that the exertions of Oriz were greater than his

frame could support, and many were the proofs they gave to corroborate their opinions. Several of them especially dwelt on the fact, that during the whole of the night, a light, such as that which would be emitted by a strong lamp, was seen burning in the chamber Oriz occupied, and the shadow of his figure was frequently seen to pass between it and the window, as if even during the night both his mind and body were occupied on the duties he had to perform.

Fra Theodore, who had been educated as a physician, and had afterwards acted as the leech of the convent, now submitted the proposition whether it was not their duty, especially when the interests of the Church were concerned, to reason with their Reverend Brother on the little care he took of his health.

“I will not disguise from you,” he continued, “that for some time past I have noticed with great anxiety the change which

has gradually taken place in our Reverend Brother's appearance, and I decidedly think that the state of his health is such as to cause us some alarm."

Another Brother, while admitting the remark to be correct, reminded the leech that Oriz evidently disliked to be questioned on the subject, and possibly he might consider it an act of indiscretion on the part of those who spoke to him of it without invitation. At last it was determined to postpone any action in the matter till a few days had passed over, and then they would be better able to judge of the necessity of bringing it under his notice, even at the risk of incurring his displeasure.

Oriz's health, so far from improving, became visibly worse, and his weakness increased; still he continued his duties as Inquisitor without intermission. It now began to be noticed, that although during the day he appeared greatly exhausted, he seemed to get more animated as night ap-

proached. Fra Theodore, the leech, had also remarked that his restlessness appeared greatly to increase towards evening. He had, he said, on more than one occasion watched him from his window several times during the course of the night, and had distinctly seen his figure pacing to and fro in his bedroom.

All now admitted the necessity that some step should be taken in the matter. Anxious, however, to avoid exciting the anger of Oriz, Fra Theodore proposed that they should first take the opinion of Dr. Ludovico Sigismondi, one of the most eminent physicians in the city, and ask him whether the necessity really existed for remonstrating with the Inquisitor on the too great exertions he was undergoing. This Fra Theodore said he could do without awakening the susceptibilities of Oriz. He had already asked the doctor to assist him with his advice on the case of one of the lay brothers, who at that

moment was lying grievously ill in his cell at the convent. When the doctor arrived he would take the opportunity of bringing him, as if accidentally, into the presence of Oriz, with whom they could enter into some casual conversation, and from the expression of countenance and general appearance of Oriz, the doctor possibly might be able to form some opinion as to the necessity of medical interference in his case.

When Dr. Sigismondi called at the convent next day, after having visited the lay brother, his patient, Fra Theodore told him the anxiety the brethren of the convent were in respecting the health of the Chief Inquisitor Oriz, and requested him as a favour to see him, mentioning at the same time his objection to be questioned on the state of his health, and that therefore they would have to use the illness of the lay brother as the ostensible reason for introducing themselves to him. The

doctor having willing assented, they proceeded together to Oriz's private room in the buildings appropriated to the Holy Office, where they found him occupied with the secretary. At first sight Oriz cast on them a suspicious glance, as if anticipating the object of their visit. If so, however, he was reassured by the tact of the doctor, who informed him that his reason for calling was to ask permission for the lay brother, who was ill, to be removed from the convent, stating that the confinement he there suffered was prejudicial to his health, and that it would be advisable for him to quit the city for the dwelling of a relative, who was a farmer in the mountains near Piacenza.

Without hesitation Oriz granted the request; in fact, he appeared relieved at the idea that the visit was not personally to him, and he conversed affably with the doctor for some minutes, appearing the while to take great interest in the con-

versation. When Fra Theodore and Dr. Sigismondi had quitted Oriz, the former asked what he thought of the appearance of the Inquisitor.

“He is far from well,” replied the doctor, “that is evident. At the same time, although it would be rash on my part to hazard a direct opinion, it appears to me from the unnaturally keen and anxious expression of his eye, that there is more of mental than bodily ailment about him. Possibly he exerts his mind too much.”

“That is precisely the conclusion I have arrived at myself,” said Fra Theodore.

“Then, of course, there can be but one remedy—perfect rest, and that you should impress upon him if you have the opportunity.”

“I would do so willingly, but unless he asks me the question, it would be an indiscretion on my part to speak to him on the subject.”

In the evening Oriz was present at supper, and appeared more cheerful than usual. There was, however, an air of excitement about him which seemed to indicate his vivacity was forced. More than once he spoke to Fra Theodore respecting the health of the lay brother, and the opinion Dr. Sigismondi had given, and he then inquired whether the doctor had not the reputation of being a very clever man.

“No one in Ferrara stands higher in his profession either in physical or mental malady,” was Fra Theodore’s reply.

Oriz made no further remark, but entered into conversation with some of the other monks, with whom he remained till they separated for the night.

The next morning Oriz sent for Fra Theodore, ostensibly for the purpose of inquiring after the health of the lay brother. Having received a reply that he was going on satisfactorily, and intended to quit the convent that day, Oriz made a few more

remarks respecting the ability of Dr. Sigismondi, and then inquired in what part of the city he resided. Fra Theodore told him, but Oriz seemed indifferent to the reply, and the conversation turned on other subjects.

After mass at noon, Oriz ordered his litter to be prepared for him, and having entered it, told the bearers loudly enough to be heard by the monks who surrounded him, that he wished to be carried to the Archiepiscopal Palace. They had hardly arrived half-way, however, when he stopped them, and said he wished instead to be carried to the house of Dr. Sigismondi, naming the street. On arriving, he fortunately found the doctor at home, and was ushered into his room. He was received by the man of science with the most profound respect. A chair having been placed for his convenience, and the servant having quitted the room and closed the door, the

doctor quietly waited for the Inquisitor to explain the object of his visit. A singular change had come over Oriz in the presence of the doctor. His habitual calm self-possession quitted him, and he appeared anxious and almost timid.

“You would do me a great favour,” he commenced, his voice almost trembling, “if you call at our convent, not to mention my visit to any of the brethren. They are,” he continued, “most anxious as to the state of my health, and I do not wish to alarm them.” And here he looked with an inquiring expression in the physician’s face, as if to see whether he believed the statement he had just made.

“You may rely upon my perfect secrecy,” said Dr. Sigismondi. “My confession in your ear would not be more sacred than will yours be in mine. Pray proceed.”

“I have no bodily ailment to complain

of, nor a pain," said Oriz. "I feel weak and nervous, that is all "

"Can you attribute it to no cause?" asked the physician.

Oriz looked at him with a doubting expression, and then hesitatingly replied—

"I know of no cause."

"Do you sleep well at night?"

"I have but little rest," replied Oriz; and then after a moment's pause, as if he dreaded the avowal he was about to make—"and that does not refresh me. On the contrary, each morning when I rise I feel even more fatigued than the previous evening."

"You cannot sleep, then?"

Oriz hesitated a moment, and then said, "On the contrary, if I but lay my head on the pillow, that moment I am asleep."

"Is your sleep disturbed by dreams, then, that you complain of fatigue when you are awake in the morning?"

“Doctor,” said Oriz, drawing his seat nearer to him and taking his hand, looking in his face at the time in an imploring manner, strangely at variance with his habitual custom, “Doctor, that is the most difficult question of all to answer. When I awake in the morning I am fully aware that I have been suffering during the night under a terrible dream, but of what nature, or what happened in it, I have not the most remote idea. Nor did it occur on one night only. Every night I am convinced it is the same, and on awaking in the morning, the terrible effects of the mental torture I have undergone are perceptible in the flood of perspiration on my brow, and the utter exhaustion of my frame. And yet, when I attempt to conjure up in my mind’s eye what has passed in the visions I have had, I can see or remember nothing. All seems clouded or hidden in one dense, black, impenetrable veil. It is the dread of this unremembered

vision, and not want of disposition to sleep, that keeps me awake. And now doctor," he continued, rising from his seat, and clasping his hands together in an attitude of prayer, "find if you can some remedy to relieve me from this terrible infliction, and I will regard you in the light of the greatest benefactor I ever had in the world."

Oriz again seated himself, and looked at the doctor with an expression of countenance in which both shame and anxiety were strongly mingled—anxiety to hear the doctor's answer, and humiliation at what he considered the derogatory earnestness of his appeal. The doctor looked at him for some moments attentively, and then said—

"The remedy, Reverend Father, is more in your own hands than mine. You have overworked your brain, and it has need of repose. Take my advice, and quit Ferrara without delay. Go to some quiet spot, and

remain there till your health is fully re-established, and then you will be able to resume your duties not only more conveniently to yourself, but with greater benefit to others. I will not disguise from you that your brain is unable to withstand the mental fatigue you are undergoing. I can say no more to you if I talk till to-morrow."

Oriz seemed much struck with the doctor's remark. He replied that he would give his advice his earnest consideration, and although he was afraid the affairs of the Church in Ferrara could hardly allow of his absence, still he would turn the subject over in his mind. He then took leave of the doctor, but had hardly reached the door when he returned, and taking the doctor's hand in both of his, and pressing it, said, with great earnestness in his tone—

"Doctor, promise me once more you will not mention one word of what has oc-

curred between us to any of the brethren of the convent, should they hear I have seen you."

"Be perfectly satisfied," replied Dr. Sigismondi, "not a word of our conversation shall pass my lips to one of them."

However strong might have been Oriz's wish to carry out the advice of the doctor, the news of the discovery of Teresa, which he heard on his arrival at the convent, with the consequent probability of his finding her father and Ochino, were subjects of such paramount interest, that he resolved to postpone the question of his temporary retirement from affairs till another opportunity.

Of the examination of Teresa and its result, the reader is already aware. Oriz, although by way of economizing his strength, he had sent his secretary to conduct Teresa's examination at the Palace of Justice, had remained at home in a state

of great anxiety to know the result of the young girl's confession, that he might be able to act upon it without delay. On hearing from his secretary what had happened, the anger of Oriz knew no bounds. He had now lost the principal clue to the discovery of the Judge Rosetti and Ochino, and that, too, by the agency of the being for whom, more than all others on earth, he probably entertained the greatest anger—the Jesuit Pelletario. He imagined that he had received from him a gross and unpardonable provocation. Unable as he was to prove it, he felt convinced that the escape of Ochino, to a certain extent, had been done through his agency. To this had been added another and still more unpardonable offence—Pelletario had received the recantation of the Duchess, thus, in fact, snatching from the hands of Oriz the honour due to her conversion to the Church of Rome. And now, the measure of his offence was full to

overflowing, for he had taken from the authority of the Inquisition a prisoner in its custody, setting not only the powers of the Holy Office at nought, but that of the Church itself.

So intense was the indignation of Oriz at Pelletario's conduct, that, for the moment, it completely drowned the complaint made by the secretary of the rebellious conduct of Brother Felix, in having quitted the convent without permission, and falsely stating that he had been authorized by the Chief Inquisitor to conduct in private an examination of a female prisoner. Although the mind of Oriz was too much occupied to pay any great attention to the accusation, he had sufficient self-possession to be aware that the crime committed by Brother Felix was one of the greatest magnitude against conventual discipline, and deserving of the severest punishment. He ordered him immediately to be confined in one of the dungeons of the Inquisition, and instead of

being allowed to take the journey to Rome with a report from the Chief Inquisitor to the General of the Order, the commission was now to be placed in the hands of another brother, whom Fra Felix should accompany to Rome as a prisoner, there to be judged by the General of the Order, and to submit to whatever punishment (which doubtless would be a severe one) might be accorded him.

The same day the secretary formally drew up the accusation, and Fra Felix was committed to the convent prison, there to await the day of his departure for Rome.

The sentence of Fra Felix having been passed, Oriz turned his thoughts on the liberation of Teresa, and the affront offered him by Pelletario. The more he thought on the subject, the more excited he became, till his eyes shone with almost unearthly light, and he paced to and fro in the room with an elasticity of step strangely different, not merely from his late decrepit manner,

but from his habitual staid pace in walking. More singular still was the expression of his countenance. He had practised control over the muscles of his face till he had learnt to subdue at will all symptoms of emotion. Now, not only was his face, and especially the muscles round his mouth, in incessant motion, but his lips moved rapidly, as if speaking on some deeply interesting subject, although not an audible word escaped them.

In this state he continued for a considerable time, when suddenly stopping in his walk, he noticed the eyes of his secretary and Fra Theodore fixed on him, and an expression of astonishment on their countenances. In a moment he recovered himself, though evidently annoyed at the two monks, especially the latter, having noticed the state of excitement he was in. He now attempted to frame some excuse for his conduct, but this he did so artificially, that it seemed rather to excite their attention

the more than to allay it. Oriz evidently felt his excuse was a failure, and, pleading fatigue, he hurriedly left the room and sought his own cell.

As soon as he had closed the door, Oriz seated himself on the bed, and folding his arms, endeavoured to collect his thoughts, so as to be able to determine on some settled plan of action. But all in vain. In spite of his efforts, circumstances of the most heterogeneous description, and without the slightest continuity, passed through his brain with unnatural rapidity. Ochino's escape, the recantation of the Duchess, and especially the liberation of Teresa without the permission of the Holy Office, mingled themselves with persecutions he was conducting against some of the principal heretics, correspondence on ecclesiastical affairs, and other matters. Not once, however, did his thoughts recur to the terrible dream which he felt assured haunted him nightly, although in the morning he

was unable to remember a single circumstance connected with it.

At last by a sudden violent effort he determined to concentrate his thoughts on one point, and then follow it up. The subject he definitely fixed on was Teresa and her liberation. He felt that in it was a settled premeditated affront, even greater to the office he held than to himself personally, and that it was his duty to resent it. But what steps should he take, and against whom? He naturally looked on Pelletario as the principal offender, but a moment's consideration taught him that the Jesuit would shelter himself under the plea that the girl's liberation was, in fact, by order of the Duke, and that he was not personally responsible for it. The Duke then was the person to be applied to, and after all he would be more tractable than the Jesuit.

Oriz remained some moments longer to examine whether any better policy could

be adopted, but found none. He then prepared to leave the convent to visit the Duke at the Este Palace. Dispensing with his litter, he quitted the convent, utterly indifferent to the curious and anxious glances of the porter and some lay brothers, who watched him as he went, wondering at the unusual elasticity of his step, so different to his infirm gait in the morning. Onward he went without slackening his speed till he had reached the grand entrance, where he saw one of the ushers, who conducted him up the great staircase to the landing-place, where he requested him to remain while he informed the Duke of his arrival. Presently the usher returned with a message from the Duke, that at the moment he was engaged on affairs of great importance; but that if the Chief Inquisitor would wait, he should soon be disengaged, and would then have much pleasure in granting him an audience.

Oriz was now ushered into a small ante-

chamber, communicating with two corridors, where he had remained but a few minutes, when a door opposite to the one by which he had entered opened, and Pelletario presented himself before him.

For some moments not a word passed between the two monks, who eyed each other, each waiting for the other to commence the attack. Oriz was the first to break ground.

“Pardon me, my brother,” he said, attempting to assume a calm demeanour, though his voice trembled with anger, “pardon me, but I have in some slight way to complain of your conduct to me.”

“My conduct to you, Reverend Brother?” said Pelletario, with affected sorrow in his tone. “You surprise me! Pray tell me in what I have offended, that I may offer you all the redress in my power. Be assured that my offence was perfectly unintentional.”

“Unfortunately, I have more than one complaint to make,” said Oriz. “But I will especially mention your receiving the recantation of her Highness. You were perfectly well aware that I was particularly commissioned by her royal nephew, the King of France, to bring her Highness back to the true faith, and it appears to me that you—pardon me if I say somewhat undesirably—have interposed between me and my penitent.”

“I assure you,” said Pelletario, “you are in error. I did not in the most remote manner interpose between you and her Highness.”

“Did you not receive her recantation?”

“True, I did,” said Pelletario. “But was that through any intervention of mine? I was greatly surprised when I received her request to visit her, naturally imagining that you, after all the consideration and care you have shown in her interest” (this the Jesuit said with the

slightest possible touch of sarcasm in his tone), "would have been the person selected by her. But excuse me if I now leave you, as I have an affair of importance to attend to. At the same time, if you still have any doubts of my conduct, why not clear them up by inquiring of her Highness herself? I have just left her, and I know she is alone. You would greatly oblige me if you would request an interview with her. The usher waits in the corridor, and could immediately take your message to her." So saying, he bowed to Oriz and left the room.

Oriz, following the suggestion of the Jesuit, opened the door, and beckoning to the usher to approach him, requested him to convey to the Duchess his wish for an interview. The man, without hesitation, obeyed him, and in a few moments returned with a message that her Highness objected to an interview. Although the man said this with great respect in his manner, Oriz

easily understood it as a direct refusal. He, however, requested the usher to return and say that he wished to speak to the Duchess on a matter of great importance respecting his Majesty the King of France.

The usher hesitated for a moment, and then said—

“I would willingly, Reverend Father, but I dare not. I told her Highness who you were, and she ordered me so peremptorily not to admit you, that I dare not take from you another message.”

The anger of Oriz was now so great, he had much difficulty in restraining it. Still, he had too much pride to allow the usher to perceive his annoyance, and remained without further remark in the ante-chamber, till he was told the Duke was ready to receive him.

On being ushered into his presence, the Duke first courteously expressed his regret that he had kept the Chief Inquisitor waiting; and he then inquired the object

of his visit, and if in any way he could afford him assistance in carrying out the good work he was employed on.

Oriz, still burning with indignation at the refusal of the Duchess to receive him, replied, that the principal object of his visit was a most delicate and, at the same time, a most painful one. It was to request the Duke to use his influence with the Duchess, so that he might carry out more fully the instructions he had received from her nephew the King of France.

"You greatly surprise me," said the Duke, "in making such an application. I had understood from the Reverend Father Pelletario that the Duchess had fully submitted to the advice contained in your letter of instructions. Has she not again become a member of our true Church? Nay more, she has with me attended mass, has confessed, and received absolution. It appears to me that was all which was required by his Majesty, unless you have

some further instructions of which you have not yet informed me, and which, let me add," continued the Duke, with considerable severity in his tone, "I shall reflect well upon before I follow. Although I have the most profound respect and gratitude for the interest his Majesty takes in the soul of our dear Duchess, you must know sufficiently the temper of the Princes of the House of Este not to be aware of the hereditary jealousy they have against any interference of foreign Powers in their domestic or political affairs."

"I have received no further instructions than those I have mentioned to your Highness. At the same time, allow me to submit they have not been fully carried out. It was especially requested that her Highness should listen to my admonitions and arguments, and she now positively refuses to admit me into her presence."

"But Dr. Matteo Oriz," said the Duke, "as the aim of your instructions was to

convert the Duchess, and that has already been accomplished, it appears to me your further assistance is not required. Her Highness is at liberty to choose her own confessor, and has done so, and I will maintain her in that privilege. There is, therefore, no occasion for us to speak more on that subject. Is there any other communication you wish to make to me?"

"But pardon me, your Highness," said Oriz, "I cannot admit that my instructions have been fully carried out. I am justified in insisting that I may have the power of convincing myself that the views which have induced her Highness again to join our Holy Church have been pure and orthodox, that I may be able to report to his Majesty fully on the subject when I return to France."

"I should be sorry, Reverend Father," said the Duke, "that any ill feeling should arise between us, and the better way to

avoid a catastrophe of the kind will be to put a stop to the present conversation. I will not hear one word more on the subject. If you have any other matter you wish to speak to me upon, do so at once, and I will give a ready ear to anything you may have to say."

"Still, your Highness, I cannot admit the subject of the conversion of the Duchess to be closed so abruptly. If you will consider——"

"Dr. Oriz," said the Duke, sternly, "I have given you my answer, and twice invited you to speak on any other subject you please. As you appear to have none other, I consider our interview as terminated, and as it would be uncourteous on my part to insist on your retiring, I will do so myself;" and the Duke, without uttering another word, quitted the room.

Oriz, as soon as he had sufficiently recovered himself to allow him to obtain

some outward control over his passions, quitted the Palace, and returned to the convent, turning over in his mind on the road in what manner he should be able to prove to the Duke that the treatment he had received was not such as should be offered to an ecclesiastic, holding as high an appointment as that of Chief Inquisitor. He felt that to submit quietly to such an affront would be to admit that the temporal power of the Duke was superior to the spiritual power placed in his hands. It was his duty, he argued, to prove to the Duke that the Church was supreme, and he resolved to do so effectually, nor would he stop till the proud Duchess would receive him and confess to him.

This train of thought still occupied his mind when he arrived at the convent. Without stopping to speak to any one, he hurriedly proceeded to the room he habitually occupied in the buildings set

apart for the business of the Holy Office, passing through the one occupied by the secretary and his assistant without noticing them. After he had closed the door of his room, he threw himself in an easy padded chair, and contracting his brows, again turned his thoughts on the unfriendly reception he had received from the Duke, and the open affront from the Duchess, and what steps he would take in the matter. He remained seated in his chair for some time, as rigid and immovable as a statue, when suddenly the rigidity of his form seemed to melt, and the expression of stern deep thought on his countenance to change to one of wonder, not unmixed with alarm. It had occurred to him for the first time that he had utterly forgotten during his stay in the Palace the principal object of his visit—the liberation of Teresa. Not a thought on the subject had crossed his mind during the time, although he now remembered the Duke twice asking him if

there was any other subject he wished to speak to him upon.

The expression of wonder on the countenance of Oriz gradually gave place to one almost amounting to terror; but again recovering himself, he rose from his chair, and opening the door of communication with the secretary's room, he hurriedly advanced to the table and said—

“Draw me out immediately an order, under the authority of the Inquisition, for the arrest of the girl Teresa Rosetti, daughter of the Judge Biagio Rosetti.”

The secretary, without delay, proceeded to obey him. So great was the haste of Oriz, that even before the secretary had completely finished, he had taken a pen from the table and dipped it in the ink, ready to affix his signature to the warrant, which when ready was passed to Oriz, who hurriedly read it, and finding it correct, prepared to sign it. To his astonishment and evident mortification, he found the pen

which he had already dipped in the ink-horn no longer in his hand. Concealing his annoyance at the somewhat ridiculous appearance he presented, he looked around for the pen, and found it was lying on the floor beside him. He now stooped to take it up, but when he rose he saw the pen still on the floor, and making a second attempt found he was unable to grasp it. He rose again nearly to an erect position, and casting a look of terror on the secretary, was about to make another attempt to stoop and pick up the pen, when he fell senseless on the floor.

Oriz, on recovering consciousness, found himself in his cell, with Fra Theodore and Dr. Sigismondi standing by his bed. He made an effort to speak to them, but was unable, for he was labouring under an attack of paralysis of the right side. He remained in bed for some time, and was not allowed to interfere in any manner whatever with the affairs of the Holy Office, as


his physician feared it might augment his malady. After some weeks he recovered sufficiently to be removed to a room in the convent, but his bodily health did not improve, while his mental condition had greatly deteriorated. Not only did the terrible unremembered dream occur to him nightly, rendering his sleep an object of dread to him, but he suffered also from another mysterious punishment. He had conceived the idea that a face, as if of a man, was continually watching him with an expression of stern terrible anger on it. But the most singular part of this hallucination was, that although he knew they were the features of a man, the face itself could not be distinguished, while the *expression* of stern anger it wore was evident, with such terrible distinctness as almost to appear material, and whichever way he looked this terrible expression seemed bent on him.

At last he conceived the idea that the

illusion which haunted him by day was in some way connected with the unremembered dream, which haunted him by night; and his mind, under this double infliction, gradually sank, till at length he reached a state of utter imbecility and helplessness.

CHAPTER VII.

BELRIGUARDO.

HREE days after the liberation of Teresa, the Duchess, her daughters, and her Court, repaired to the Palace of Belriguardo, which she continued to inhabit till the death of her husband Duke Ercole. She rarely afterwards visited the city, partly from the painful reminiscences connected with it, and partly from the dread she had of being seen by those who had formerly known her as a Protestant. It must not be imagined that Renée's life at Belriguardo was one of great seclusion or hardship. It would have been impossible, on the contrary, for her to have chosen a more delightful residence. Erected

about a century before by the Marchese Nicolo, it was afterwards enlarged and embellished by the Dukes Borso and Ercole I., the grandfather of Renée's husband. At the death of Ercole it became the favourite residence of his daughter-in-law Lucrezia Borgia, then married to Duke Alfonso. Lucrezia passed a considerable portion of the nineteen years of her married life in it, and fitted it up with such exquisite taste that it was considered the most beautiful country palace in Italy. Ercole II., the husband of Renée, had also laid out vast sums of money on it. Count Annibale Romeo, who resided there for some time, says it was so vast that there were as many chambers in it as there were days in the year, and the poet Guarini wrote that Belriguardo Palace had no equal in the world.*

From her first arrival in Italy Belriguardo

* See Note, page 237.

had always been a favourite sojourn with the Duchess Renée, but never had it appeared more attractive than when she reached it after her recantation. Although in her *cortège*, which was a numerous one, were several individuals whose presence she would readily have dispensed with, such as the Jesuit Pelletario, and Sister Laura the nun, even the ride to it had a calming effect on her mind after the anxieties and persecutions she had lately suffered.

In the carretta with the Duchess were the two Princesses and Teresa, which was followed by another with Madonna Bonifazio, the nun, and two of the ladies of the suite, while Pelletario, accompanied by two other ecclesiastics on mules, with some gentlemen-in-waiting, followed on horseback. Although hardly coming within the range of his priestly duties, Pelletario seemed to have taken upon himself the arrangement of the whole proceedings. Not that he openly interfered, but simply

by his advice and suggestions, whispered occasionally in the ear of the chief of the escort and the major domo, he seemed to direct the whole.

After their arrival at the Palace, Pelletario still kept a watchful eye over all that took place. His position (for he was now confessor to the Duchess) of course gave him great weight in the establishment, and his most trifling hint was invariably acted upon with implicit obedience. Teresa, before their departure from Ferrara, had already assumed her duties as chief lady-in-waiting on her Highness, nor, although a Protestant, and as such proscribed by law, did Pelletario offer the slightest objection, which in his official capacity as confessor to the Duchess, he had the power to do. At the same time he impressed on Madonna Bonifazio and Sister Laura the necessity of being always present with the Princesses when in the society of Teresa, making exception, however, to those occa-

sions on which the Duchess required their presence, when they were absolved from the necessity of attending should her Highness not wish it.

Teresa was now almost the constant companion of the Duchess. For some few days after they had arrived at Belriguardo, Renée hardly ever quitted the walls of the Palace, and even then she seemed to have an aversion to the officials who habitually resided there seeing her. Many of them had been Protestants, but they now, she more than feared, had followed her example and become members of the Church of Rome, though she did not like to question them on the subject. These especially she dreaded to meet, feeling that she had done them a gross and irreparable injustice, and one for which it would be difficult indeed to offer compensation. Two of the superior female domestics she knew had remained true to their faith. They were of French Swiss origin. Although they had long resided

in Italy, being well known as favourites of Renée, these women had been allowed to remain Protestants under the sole condition that on the first favourable opportunity they should quit the Duchy, with the understanding that should they again be seen on Ferrarese territory they would infallibly be arrested and tried as heretics.

Singularly enough, Renée seemed to have less compunction in meeting these two women than those who had become perverts to the Church of Rome. She appeared to feel she had done them no personal injustice, and much as she might have felt on any other occasion the degraded position she occupied in their eyes, it was little indeed in comparison to the pain she underwent in seeing those whom she had indirectly succeeded in misleading.

A few days after her residence at Belriguardo, Renée seemed to summon up more courage, and, accompanied by Teresa,

would stroll about the magnificent park and gardens which surrounded the Palace, occasionally speaking to the servants, gardeners, and gamekeepers she met with. All these at first seemed to regard her with looks of great curiosity, and many with evident sorrow, for although Protestantism had gained a certain number of converts among those resident in the Palace, as well as those inhabiting the territory which surrounded it, there were many others who had been half converted, and who, although they had not joined the Reformed faith, held its ministers and adherents in great respect. By degrees, however, as they became more accustomed to Renée's presence, this feeling seemed to wear off, till at last there was no more either of surprise or objection in their manner when meeting her, than when she was a Protestant.

Pelletario, though rarely seen by the Duchess, kept a keen eye over her move-

ments. To do him justice, he not only treated her with great respect, but the directions he gave were marked with a considerable amount of delicacy and tact. Knowing full well how painful it would be to Renée to receive any reports of the persecutions which were being carried on against the Protestants in Ferrara, he took every means of preventing them reaching her ear. He strictly impressed on the Princesses, as well as Madonna Bonifazio and Sister Laura, to abstain from any remarks on the prosecutions which were taking place in the city. Nay, more, he also advised them not to touch on religious subjects unless they were first commenced by her Highness, and then not to make use of one word or sentence which could in any way bring to her mind the submission (for Pelletario could not disguise from himself it was not from any conscientious conviction) she had lately made to the Church of Rome. When mass was performed in

the chapel of the Palace, Renée was rarely present; still no remarks were made on her absence by Pelletario, and if any one spoke on the subject in his presence he merely "regretted the indisposition her Highness had been labouring under, and which had evidently prevented her being present."

Pelletario's behaviour to Teresa offered a curious study. Jesuit as he was, and anxious for the advancement of the interests of the Church of Rome (and especially his own order), and ready as he was to receive with open arms a convert, no matter of how ignoble or uninteresting a description, he made not the slightest attempt to interfere with the religious belief of Teresa. Nor did this arise from any indifference on his part to her. On the contrary, it is more than probable it was a sort of tacit respect he could not help shewing to the courage the beautiful and amiable young girl had shown in maintain-

ing her faith, as well as her devotion to her father. When he met her alone, or in company, while treating her with great respect, there was a certain good-tempered, dry sort of humour about him, with which Teresa hardly knew whether to be angry or pleased. She instinctively felt that through the courteous and pleasing manners of the Jesuit, and his half-jesting style, in point of ability she was a mere child in his hands, and that he understood every thought she formed. He did not allow either Madonna Bonifazio or Sister Laura, the nun, to speak to Teresa on religious subjects, stating as a reason, that it was much better to induce her gradually, by their example, to turn towards the true faith, and then when once they had so far succeeded, there would be little difficulty in completing her conversion.

For more than a month Teresa remained without any great anxiety respecting her father. He had promised to write to her

as soon as he should be permanently settled in Zurich; but in those days men travelled slowly, and letters took a considerable time to traverse the distance from Zurich to Ferrara. Another difficulty also existed—the means by which letters could be transported. In the reign of the former Duke, Alfonso, something like the embryo of a post-office, as well as a government posting establishment, had been formed, but this reached no farther than the extremity of the Duchy of Ferrara, while in the Duchy of Mantua, and in Lombardy, as far as Como, postal arrangements were still of a most primitive description. At Como, even the faintest semblance of any postal arrangement ceased, and the transmission of letters and messages up the lake and across the Splugen mountain, and the long distance between it and Zurich, had to be confided either to boatmen or carriers, who transmitted them to one another as they passed,

or else they were sent the whole distance by private hand.

With the limited resources possessed by her father, Teresa easily understood that it would have been out of his power to have employed a special messenger, and that the progress of a letter without it would be tardy indeed. Still, in her conversations with the Duchess, they determined that in a month's time they ought to receive some communication from the Judge. The month, however, passed, and another followed it, still no letter from Zurich, and Teresa now began to conjure up all imaginable excuses for the delay, though without any satisfactory result. At last she one day was informed that a man, something in the dress of a ferryman, had arrived at the Palace and wished to see her. On being asked his business and his name, the servant replied he would give neither, but that he had urged the necessity of seeing Teresa

with so much earnestness, that notwithstanding his poverty-stricken appearance, it was their duty to inform her of his wish.

Teresa, remembering that Giacomo, who had escorted her father to Zurich, was a ferryman, immediately ordered him to be admitted. To her great surprise, however, it was Gerolamo who entered the room. He told her he was the bearer of a letter to her which had been brought from Zurich by his friend Giacomo, the ferryman, who would have presented it himself, but he feared he might be watched if he came to the Palace; not that he had any alarm on his own account, but as it was known he was a Protestant, it might bring suspicion to bear upon Teresa, should it be found out that he had a commission to see her.

Teresa paid but little attention to Gerolamo's words, but hastily telling him to remain where he was till her return, she hurried off to her own chamber, that she might read without interruption the letter

her father had sent her. After she had cut the thread which bound it, she was so much agitated that it was some minutes before she could sufficiently collect herself to read the contents of the letter, and when she did so, her haste was so great that she rather glanced her eye over detached sentences in different parts than read it through.

Finding from these fragments that the journey seemed to have been accomplished very satisfactorily, and that her father's reception in Zurich had been a friendly one, she now summoned up sufficient patience to read the letter consecutively. In it her father had given her a detailed account of his journey, with the intent of tracing the route she should take when she had the opportunity of joining him. He told her they had reached Mantua in a boat Giacomo had engaged for them, and from thence they had gone on foot to Verona, then, passing by the Lake Como, they

crossed the mountains into Switzerland. On his arrival in Zurich, he had the great happiness to meet his Reverend friend the Pastor Ochino, who after a very successful sojourn in Venice, where he had received considerable contributions for his mission, had quitted Italy in safety. Rosetti went on further to state, that he had resolved to establish himself as an advocate in Zurich. He had, when young, been several years in Germany, and was perfectly acquainted with the language, so that there would be no difficulty on that account. He was happy to say that his reputation as a lawyer stood as high in Zurich as it had done in Ferrara, and that if he had the blessing of Heaven on his endeavours, he hoped in a short time to be able to send her the funds necessary for her journey; and he would leave to her discretion, and the kind patronage of the Duchess, the task of making such arrangements as might be convenient for it.

After expressing strongly his gratitude for the care and assistance rendered him by Giacomo, he concluded his letter by the hope that he should soon again have the pleasure of embracing his dear child, who had shown him so much attachment, and who had had the courage, in spite of all dangers which threatened her, to maintain the Protestant faith.

Teresa, overjoyed with her letter, which was dated nearly a month earlier than she had received it, ran with it into the apartments of the Duchess. Fortunately she found her alone, and Renée, seeing the excited and joyous expression on the young girl's countenance, and the letter in her hand, easily guessed all.

"Teresa, my child, I congratulate you," she said, "for I easily read in your eyes the intelligence you have received is pleasing. May I ask what it is?"

Teresa attempted to give a hurried abstract from the letter, in which from

her impatience and excitement she signally failed. Renée then said to her, smiling—

“If there are no secrets in your letter, I think your better plan would be to read it to me, for candidly, as far as you have gone, I feel some difficulty in understanding it.”

Teresa immediately obeyed the Duchess, and commenced reading her father's letter, stopping on more than one occasion to make comments and hear remarks from the Duchess on the different episodes it contained. All went on well enough till they came to the concluding paragraph, in which Rosetti complimented his daughter on her courage in maintaining the true faith.

In her haste, Teresa had not reflected on the dangerous ground she was about to tread, nor did she remember it till it was too late. A dead silence now for some moments reigned between Renée and her

young friend, which was broken by the former saying—

“Your father, Teresa, has not, I perceive, heard of my fall. Pray God it may not reach his ears! May he never know the degraded creature I am, an object of abhorrence to myself and to every member of the faith I have deserted.” And here, Renée, unable to restrain herself, burst into a flood of tears.

Teresa endeavoured to console her, and added, among other arguments, that she was certain her Highness was still in her heart a Protestant.

“My child,” said the Duchess, somewhat reproachfully, “can you for a moment doubt it? Yes, I feel at this moment as strong a love for the Reformed creed, and as strong a detestation of the idolatries and abominations of Rome, as when Calvin himself first converted me to the true faith. Before you reach Zurich, your father will have heard perhaps of my unworthy con-

duct. Speak of me to him, and to the Reverend Pastor Ochino, and the members of his flock, with as much pity as you can, for I merit it. I know, Teresa, you think I might have followed your example, and maintained my faith in the dungeon, and under the prospect of the torture; but you are not a mother, and when you are, possibly you may find excuses for my behaviour which at present are unfelt by you. But let us change the conversation," she continued, making a great effort. "We must now consider what steps can be taken for your journey to Zurich. Did the man who accompanied your father bring you the letter?"

"He did not," said Teresa. "He entrusted it to a poor man, whose blind mother, a Protestant, sheltered poor Madonna Ponte and myself for several days in her humble dwelling near the banks of the river opposite the Boschetto. The kindness the mother showed us, and the

fidelity of her son in keeping our secret, and assisting us in every manner so that our concealment should be perfect, is still fresh on my memory, and I much wish I could do something to serve him."

"In what position of life is he?" asked Renée.

"He was formerly a soldier," said Teresa, "and is now as poor as it is possible for a man to be. He has had a good education, for formerly they were in a very respectable position in society."

"His mother, you say, is a Protestant; I suppose the son is also one?"

Teresa, with some embarrassment, said he was not. That to save his mother he had nominally become a convert to the Church of Rome, but that she felt convinced in his heart he was still a Protestant.

"I can sympathize with him then," said the Duchess, after a moment's silence. "Heaven knows I have no right to sit

in judgment upon him. Where is he now?"

"He is in the ante-room below," said Teresa, "awaiting my return."

"I will see him myself. Bring him here."

Teresa left the room, and returned in a few moments with Gerolamo, who, poverty-stricken as was his appearance, seemed by no means abashed in the presence of her Highness.

"This lady," said Renée to him, "tells me that you and your mother have been kind to her and another lady of my suite, during the time they found it necessary to remain in concealment. Tell me what I can do to serve both you and your mother, and if it is in my power it shall be done."

"Alas, your Highness, I have no mother! she died last week; and relieved from her misery on earth, is now, I am persuaded, an angel in heaven."

“Are you a Catholic and say so?” said Renée.

Gerolamo remained silent, although there was no difficulty in perceiving he anxiously wished to speak. Noticing his behaviour, Renée said to him—

“Nay, man, speak out. Do not fear me. What you say shall not be to your prejudice, believe me.”

“If I may speak the truth,” said Gerolamo, “I was a Catholic while my poor mother lived, that I might save her from persecution. Now she is gone it would take but little to make me declare myself a Protestant.”

Teresa was greatly surprised at hearing of the death of the blind widow, yet a moment’s consideration taught her that her lot was rather to be envied than deplored.

“And what may your present occupation be?” asked Renée.

“I have none, your Highness, though I earnestly seek it. The few soldi I have

earned in bringing this letter to Bel-riguardo, I look upon as a godsend to me."

"You were formerly a soldier," said Renée, "were you not?"

"I was, and I trust a brave one too," replied Gerolamo. "But now there is no war, they can obtain younger and better recruits than I shall make."

After a moment's silence, Renée said to him—

"This young lady is likely to proceed to Zurich to join her father; would you like to make part of her escort?"

The habitual phlegm of Gerolamo gave way under the offer. Claspings his hands together, he said—

"I can imagine no better fortune, your Highness, and willingly would I reside in Zurich, where I could openly declare myself to be what I really am in my heart—a Protestant."

"Teresa, my child," said the Duchess,

“take this man to the major domo, and tell him he is to be accommodated in the Palace, and especially that he is to be better clothed, and treated as one of the domestics of our establishment.”

Nothing more that day passed between the Duchess and Teresa relative to the latter's departure for Zurich. Early on the morrow, however, to her intense surprise, Renée entered the room before Teresa had risen from her bed. Seating herself by the bedside, Renée said to her—

“I daresay you are somewhat surprised at my visit, Teresa, and will be more so when you hear its object. It is to talk over with you what preparations should be made for your journey, for the sooner you leave the better for your father's happiness and my own peace of mind. Every hour you remain, my child, will but increase the pain I shall feel at parting with you. Better one sharp pang than linger

for a time in pain. During the whole of last night I did not close my eyes, so great was my sorrow, and I have now resolved that you shall join your father as soon as everything is in readiness for your journey."

"I trust your Highness will not forget me when I am gone," said Teresa imploringly.

"Forget you, my child!" said Renée, "never! My own daughters, much as I love them, are scarcely dearer to me than you are. But all things considered, it is better we should part—better for you, better for your father, better for myself. Still we may be near in spirit, though the Alps divide us. Write to me by every opportunity you have, and I promise you not one of your letters shall remain unanswered. But now, let us speak of your journey. I expect his Highness will to-day arrive from Ferrara, and I have no doubt he will order that every protection shall

be afforded you while you are in his dominions. As you will doubtless pass through Mantua, I will request him to give you a letter to his relative the Duke, who will, I am sure, order things in such a way as to secure you against annoyance while in his territory, as well as assist you to proceed. I have already selected for you two female companions on whom you may rely—my two Swiss servants Carlotta and Marta. They have, being Protestants, received an order to quit the Duchy on the first convenient opportunity, and now one offers. True, they are natives of Lucerne; but I will supply you with ample funds to pay their journey onwards from Como. And now for your male escort, on whom can we rely? Do you know any one you can trust?"

Teresa, after a moment's consideration, suggested that she knew of no one better than Gerolamo, of whose fidelity and integrity she had already had good proof.

“Let us select him then,” said Renée. “He has, I understand, already been a soldier, and you say has received a good education, and in courage and ability will be quite equal to the task. His Highness, at my request, will, I am sure, grant him permission to wear the uniform of his guard; and that will not only insure him attention while in the Duchy, but after quitting it as well. And now my child,” continued Renée, “I will leave you. Do not yet speak of your departure to the Princesses. The news will cause them sorrow enough even at the latest.” Then, after kissing Teresa affectionately, the Duchess left the room.

The Duke, as Renée had anticipated, arrived in the course of the day from Ferrara. He offered no objection either to Teresa’s projected departure, or to allow Gerolamo to wear the uniform of his guard; and he gave orders to the commanding officer that one should immediately be pre-

pared for him. In all other respects he seemed to be indifferent to the subject. His mind was evidently pre-occupied with affairs in Ferrara, where, at the request of the Inquisitors, he had lately promulgated another *grida* or edict, containing an elaborate scale of punishments against heretics, or, as they now began to term them, blasphemers of the Virgin Mary and the saints. Renée had informed him that she wished, till all was in readiness, no notice should be taken of Teresa's contemplated departure. The Duke promised not to speak of it, and when he met Teresa in the afternoon, he behaved to her as if he had not heard that in a few days she would quit the Palace never to return. Possibly the whole circumstance had escaped his memory.

About a week after the receipt of her father's letter, everything was in readiness for Teresa's departure from Belriguardo. It was only the day before she was to leave

that the Princesses were informed of it. They were sorrowful indeed at the idea of losing their young friend. Sister Laura meekly suggested that it would be advisable for her to remain some time longer, so that she might be converted; but even Madonna Bonifazio refused to support the nun in her suggestion, urging as an excuse, that having been a parent herself, she could easily imagine the sorrow and anxiety felt by the Judge Biagio Rosetti, heretic as he was, in being separated from his daughter.

In the afternoon Gerolamo presented himself to Teresa to receive instructions for the journey. At first sight she had some difficulty in recognising him, so much had he altered in appearance since she had last seen him. Instead of the shabby civilian's dress he then wore, and which was almost in rags, he was now attired in the magnificent uniform, one side red and the other white, of the Duke's guard. On putting

on the uniform and buckling on his sword, Gerolamo seemed at the same time to have again adopted the bearing of a soldier. Instead of his habitual somewhat slovenly appearance, he now stood erect, and the furtive or rather cynical expression of his eye had changed into an open soldier-like gaze.

Teresa informed him that they were to proceed by the shortest route to Mantua, from thence through Verona and Milan to Como, and then across the mountains to Switzerland; that a carretta would be prepared for her, and the servants who were to accompany her; and that he would have a horse provided for him to ride, while the mules would follow with the baggage. Gerolamo having promised that all should be in readiness at the appointed time, retired, and Teresa passed a sorrowful evening with the Duchess and the Princesses.

Early the next morning, the arrange-

ments for Teresa's departure being completed, the carretta came round to the principal door of the Palace, and the two servants, Gerolamo, and the muleteers were already below waiting for her to join them. The Duchess and the Princesses, with Madonna Bonifazio and Sister Laura, accompanied Teresa to the Palace door to bid her farewell. With the exception of the Jesuit, who had also joined them, there was scarcely a dry eye among the whole group. The Duchess and her daughters embraced her tenderly. Madonna Bonifazio was scarcely less demonstrative, and even Sister Laura seemed to forget for the moment that the girl was a heretic, and kissed her affectionately as she bade her good-bye. Pelletario, who had stood by watching them with great attention, when it came to his turn to bid Teresa farewell, suddenly changed the serious expression which had been on his face to a bland smile, and with great courtesy wished her a plea-

sant journey. The smile, however, vanished the moment after, and he resumed his former seriousness. He watched the young girl attentively as she entered the carretta, and as it drove off, he for the first and only time showed any interest in the proceeding. Raising his hand in the direction the carretta was taking, he made the sign of benediction, and then turned away and sought his own apartment. It would be difficult to analyse with certitude the Jesuit's feeling on the occasion. Was it that in spite of himself, or rather in spite of the principles of his order, he wished his blessing to follow the amiable heretic girl on her way to her father?

NOTE. Page 207.—This magnificent palace has since been destroyed. All that now remains of it are a few poor rooms used as a farm-house. Its demolition began about the commencement of the eighteenth century. Duke Ercole, at his death, bequeathed it, with the immense domains surrounding it, to Renée, on the condition of *her remaining a good Catholic.*

Renée, however, immediately after her husband's death, declared herself a Protestant, and relinquishing her splendid legacy, returned to France, where she remained till her death, a staunch defender of the persecuted Huguenots.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JOURNEY.



OUR narrative draws rapidly to a close. Before accompanying Teresa on her journey, we must dedicate a few pages to the reception her father met with in Zurich, and the termination of Camille Gurdon's exploits. As already stated, Biagio Rosetti the ex-judge had met with no inconveniences on the road, and when he arrived a most cordial reception had been given him by the Pastor Ochino, and the congregation of fugitive Italian Protestants gathered round him in that city. Rosetti at once determined to make Zurich his home, and to establish himself as an advocate there. In a short

time, thanks to his eloquence, integrity, and profound knowledge of the law, he succeeded in obtaining a considerable body of clients, and those too of a class capable of remunerating him with sufficient liberality to allow him to maintain himself and daughter in ease and respectability. Indeed, before the arrival of Teresa, he had already furnished a house (modestly enough it is true) for her reception. At length the intelligence reached him that in a few days his daughter would quit Belriguardo for Zurich, and in all probability within a fortnight after his receipt of her letter, she would join him. As may easily be imagined Teresa's letter gave Rosetti great satisfaction, and he began to count the hours till they should again behold each other, every succeeding hour appearing longer to him than the former.

Camille Gurdon, after he had remained about a month in the prison of the In-

quisition, received notice that he was to accompany one of the Dominicans, about to start on a mission to Rome. At the same time, to avoid scandal, he would, to all appearance, be treated on the road as a novice of the order, but, in fact, he was in no other position than a prisoner on his way to be tried at the head office of the Inquisition in Rome, on a charge of committing a gross breach of conventual discipline. He was allowed to take with him no other dress than the garb he wore—that of a novice of the Dominican Order, and so little reliance had his superiors on his good behaviour, that to prevent the possibility of his escape, the two lay brothers, who ostensibly were commissioned to attend on the monk, were secretly instructed to keep a strict eye on Camille's movements. They were further authorised to call in the secular power to their assistance, should he make any attempt to escape.

For some time the young Swiss gave neither the monk nor the lay brothers the slightest cause for uneasiness, so tractable and courteous was his behaviour. Though both lay brothers treated him with marked respect and good feeling, with one of them, who carried the purse and acted as paymaster on the journey, he became an especial favourite. This man, who had formerly been a steward in the family of one of the principal nobles in Ferrara, was not only possessed of great intelligence, but was singularly conversant—at any rate for a man in his position of life—with the chief events which for some time past had occurred in the city. From him Camille Gurdon learnt by degrees that Biagio Rosetti had, under the protection of the Duke, effected his escape to Zurich, and that it was further reported that his daughter Teresa, who was at the moment a guest of the Duchess, was expected immediately to quit Belriguardo (if she

had not already done so) and join her father.

Once in possession of this intelligence, Camille Gurdon easily concluded that for the future Rosetti would remain in Zurich with his daughter Teresa. During his long solitude in the dungeons of the Inquisition his love for Teresa, instead of diminishing, had increased in intensity, and he resolved that, should he ever be able to obtain his liberation, he would use every means in his power to regain her affection. He saw the strong probability that Teresa had not informed her father of the despicable conduct he (Camille Gurdon) had been guilty of, not only in playing the spy on Rosetti's family, but of being one of the principal agents in bringing under the notice of the Inquisition all that had taken place in the Palace of San Francesco, and the conduct of the Duchess and those attached to her Court.

In this conclusion Camille Gurdon was

correct. At first the certainty of his treason acted so painfully on the mind of the poor girl that she dreaded even the mention of his name, and afterwards when the feeling had somewhat subsided, she felt herself so degraded in having ever loved a being so contemptible, that she determined to conceal, even from her father, the most remote idea that anything of the kind had ever occurred. Possibly she might have made him her confidant, if she had had the opportunity of seeing him more frequently before quitting Ferrara, but as the reader is aware, she had no interview with him from the time he quitted the city with Bernardino Ochino, till he was placed under surveillance in the Belvedere Palace, and then but once prior to his departure for Zurich. It need hardly be stated that if Teresa had objected verbally to inform her father of Camille's behaviour, it was even less likely she

would have done so by letter. She appeared, in fact, to shut from herself as much as possible all thought on the subject, never even speaking of it to her friend the Duchess.

Having determined to make his escape, Camille Gurdon's next move was to draw from the lay brothers the route they were to take to Rome. He was informed that their road would lay through Ravenna and Rimini, as in both these cities the Dominicans had a convent, and to the superiors the monk was the bearer of dispatches from the Inquisition in Ferrara.

Camille now began to concoct his scheme of escape. He was for some time in doubt whether he should attempt it when near the marshes of Ravenna, or when passing through the pine forests extending between that city and Rimini. After calculating the chances with as much accuracy as he could, he at last

resolved to attempt his escape in the pine forest, considering it would be easier to find his way from it than from the marshes, in case by any chance he should get entangled in the latter. Camille now anxiously awaited an opportunity, and at length one was placed within his reach.

After quitting Ravenna on their way to Rimini, one of the two baggage mules broke down, and the other, ridden by the lay brother with whom Camille had been the more intimate, also fell lame, and was no longer able to proceed on the journey. A singular circumstance was connected with the lameness of this mule. When they had arrived at a small inn in the middle of the day to take refreshment, the mule had shown no symptoms of lameness, but when taken from the stable, a slight tenderness in the hoof became apparent. The lay brother, however, who had but little inclination to walk, mounted

him, and they continued on their road towards Rimini. The mule's lameness increased as they went, till at last the poor brute seemed hardly able to put its foot to the ground. The lay brother had now no alternative but to walk, and the party continued on their road some three miles further, when they reached the inn where they determined to remain for the night.

It was now that Camille Gurdon resolved to put his plan of escape into execution. He it was who had caused the lameness of the mule by running a needle into its pastern. In doing this he had calculated that the lay brother would be obliged to walk, and as he was a man somewhat advanced in years, he would naturally be exceedingly fatigued and inactive when they arrived at their destination in the evening. This turned out to be the case. So fatigued was the lay brother, that after swallowing a few

mouthfuls of supper, he went to the chamber allotted to him, and undressing threw himself on the bed, and in a few moments was fast asleep. The others of the party seemed also tired, and retiring to rest early, were also soon asleep. Camille, however, remained in his room waiting till the whole household should be in their first slumber, when it would be easier for him to attempt his escape. At length, considering the moment propitious, he softly opened his door, and stealthily entered the chamber of the lay brother who carried the purse. Having done this without disturbing him, he took off his monk's frock, and then dressed himself in the clothes of the lay brother. Finding the purse was in the pocket, he next took up the wallet, and throwing it over his shoulder, descended into the courtyard. Noiselessly he saddled the mule which the monk had ridden, and after filling the wallet with provisions

from the kitchen, he again entered the stable, and leading out the mule, mounted it, and made off in the direction of the forest.

Here he remained for the next two days, bending his course northwards the while. Thanks to his disguise, he passed on without difficulty, and in due time not only succeeded in reaching Mantua, and crossing the Brenna mountain, but at length, by a very circuitous route, arrived at Zurich in safety. Without any difficulty he found out the dwelling of the Judge Rosetti. But now an important doubt arose in his mind—in what manner should he be received by his old friend? So heavily did this doubt weigh on him that he had already been some days in Zurich before deciding what course to adopt. On the Sunday after his arrival, he determined on attending the Italian Protestant service in the church which had been hastily constructed for the use of the emigrants.

Having inquired whether the Judge had any particular seat, one was pointed out to him, and Camille placed himself opposite to it on the other side of the temple, so that he might be distinctly seen by Rosetti when he entered. Although Camille pretended to be absorbed in the service, from time to time he cast a furtive glance on the ex-Judge, and to his great satisfaction, he had no difficulty in discerning that Rosetti had recognised him. He concluded, moreover, from the expression on the countenance of the Judge, that the reception he should meet with after the service was over, would be a friendly one.

Camille was not mistaken in his supposition. Rosetti received him with open arms, and invited him to his dwelling, and there inquired in what manner he had succeeded in escaping from his persecutors in Ferrara. Camille easily fabricated an answer, in which he painted, with great

vividness, divers imaginary dangers and fatigues he had gone through, in all of which the Judge seemed greatly interested. In return, Rosetti informed Camille of the manner of his escape, and concluded by telling him that in a few days he expected the arrival of his daughter Teresa, who had already quitted Belriguardo, in company with the Swiss ladies. Camille inquired the route she would take, and was told in reply that she would pass through Como, and over the Splugen mountains, by Tuis and Coire, and from thence to Zurich. He added that he was not without some anxiety as to the manner she would pass the mountain, especially on the Swiss side, as he had that day heard that the inundations caused by the Rhine were not only extensive at the foot of the mountain, but the pass through the Via Mala was itself in a very dangerous condition.

The next day, Rosetti received a mes-

sage from Camille Gurdon, saying that, wishing to see a relative at Tusingen, he had quitted early in the morning; and also stating that, in case he found there was any truth in the report of the inundations, he would search for Teresa, and if he found her he would not leave her again till she was in a place of safety. Camille's motive for this proceeding can easily be explained. He determined, if possible, to meet Teresa, and again implore her to return his love, and keep silent all that had taken place. If she consented, he would then accompany her to Zurich. If she positively refused him, he would wend his way as he best could to Geneva, or take such steps as he might deem advisable.

Teresa, accompanied by the two ladies, her maid, and Gerolamo, continued their road through Mantua to Como. Here Teresa, having parted from the ladies, hired a boat, and attended only by Gerolamo and her female servant, in due time arrived at

Chiavenna, without meeting with any accident on the way. She was obliged, however, to remain at Chiavenna for some days, the terrific floods which had occurred on the mountain having destroyed a considerable portion of the road on the Italian side; while she received intelligence that the inundations on the Swiss side had been even more destructive. At length, she was told she might proceed, and slowly, with great difficulty and not altogether unaccompanied by danger, she made her way up the mountain, and descended on the Swiss side, as far as the village of Splugen. Here she was again detained for some days. Intelligence had been received that the pass through the *Via Mala* had been so much damaged by the floods, that not only was the road unsafe, but that one at least of the bridges had been carried away. Patience and resignation to the will of the Almighty were now the only consolations the poor girl had. Day after day

passed, but without any good intelligence reaching her. To her inquiries whether the road was still impracticable, she always received the same reply—not only would it be impossible for her to continue her journey until the bridges were again placed in something like order, but that the road itself was in such a condition that it would be madness for a young girl like her to attempt to pass it.

After a delay of about ten days in the village of Splugen, Teresa received notice that the passage was at last practicable; at the same time she must summon up all her nerve, as her courage would on more than one point be severely tried, and that any want of self-possession on her part might be followed by very disastrous results. Her anxiety again to see her father was so great, that timid as she naturally was, she felt her courage quite equal to any danger she might meet with. The mules were laden, and Teresa, her

servant, and their guide leading Gerolamo's mule (for the latter insisted on leading that of his young mistress), proceeded on their road down the mountain. On several occasions they found great difficulties in their way, from the immense quantity of stones and boulders which had been swept down from the mountains by the torrent, and which now completely obstructed the road. These, however, were at last successfully surmounted, and they continued onwards and downwards till they reached the entrance to the *Via Mala*.

Teresa now found that the description given her at the inn of the devastations caused by the storm, had not in any way been exaggerated. Strong as was her courage, and cheered as she undoubtedly was by Gerolamo, frequently she trembled as the latter conducted her mule along steep inclines, caused by the breaking down of the road. At one point it was with the

greatest possible difficulty that Teresa could summon up sufficient courage to sit steadily on her mule, so imminent did the danger she was in appear to her. It was when crossing the temporary bridge, which within the last few days had been constructed, and which was to last no longer than the time necessary to rebuild the former in its original situation, that Teresa felt the greatest alarm. The slight plank bridge was not more than three feet broad, and without any balustrades, while the Rhine beneath her, to the depth of between seven and eight hundred feet, roared loudly as if ravenous for its prey, while the rocks in the narrow gorge rose perpendicularly on each side to an immense height, as if stopping all possibility of escape. The moment at which the peril was, perhaps, the greatest in the mind of Teresa, was when her mule, before stepping on the planks which formed the bridge, tapped them with its fore hoof as if to

ascertain whether it might trust itself across with safety. Even then the sagacious animal seemed for a moment in doubt; but encouraged, perhaps, by the voice of Gerolamo, it at last ventured onwards. Teresa, at the time, clung spasmodically to her saddle, and uttered a faint cry of terror. Gerolamo, however, advised her to close her eyes, and summon up all the courage she possessed, and he would engage to lead her across in safety.

Having effected the passage of the bridge, they now continued their road onwards down the steep declivity leading to the plain, through dangers scarcely less terrible than those they had just encountered. Still, fortunately all passed off without accident, and to their great joy they at last quitted the dark and gloomy gorge, and entered into the broad daylight of the plain at its entrance. Here danger again awaited them. The inundations of the Rhine had

spread far over the country, occasionally covering even the road itself, which the different eddies formed by the rapid current threatened to sweep entirely away. At one point, where one of these eddies was of far greater force and magnitude than any they had hitherto passed, they found some peasants collected round an object which had been cast on shore. Impelled by curiosity, Teresa and her suite advanced, and, on inquiring of the peasants what it was they were gazing at, were informed that the dead body of a man had been cast there by the stream. A terrible attraction drew Teresa onward to look at the body, even against her own inclination, and when her eyes fell on it, a sensation of faintness came over her, and she would have fallen from her saddle had she not been caught by Gerolamo. In her momentary glance at the bruised and disfigured corpse which lay stretched helplessly on the ground, she

imagined she had distinguished the features of her lover—Camille Gurdon.

Nor was Teresa wrong in her conclusion. Camille, after he had quitted Zurich, made diligent inquiries in every village and town he passed through—nay, of every person he met—whether they could give him any intelligence respecting Teresa. He was able, however, to gain none; and this confirmed him in his conclusion that she had not yet descended the mountain. Onward he went, and yet no intelligence could he obtain; although, from the continued reports he heard of the swollen state of the stream, and the ruin it had caused on the mountain, he was more convinced than ever that Teresa had not yet reached the plain. From Coire he passed on to Tüsis, and from thence into the Via Mala, and succeeded with considerable difficulty in reaching the bridge. Here a terrific storm was raging at its highest, and an immense

rock which at the moment fell from the mountain at the side carried away the bridge, and Camille Gurdon was precipitated with its ruins into the abyss beneath.

On arriving at Tuis (to which town Teresa had been carried, for she was unable to remount her mule), she endeavoured to ascertain, if possible, who was the unfortunate man whose body had been cast on the shore by the river. No information, however, could she obtain. Not a paper was found on him, nor any object beyond a wallet containing a few necessaries, and a purse with some gold coin in it. She would willingly have inquired what had been done with the body, but she had not the courage. Her maid, however, relieved her from the difficulty. Teresa had remained two days at Tuis, and the girl had strolled out one afternoon into the neighbourhood, and on her return told her

mistress she had attended the funeral of the poor man whose body had been found on the shore. Teresa made no reply, and endeavoured to conceal all evidence of emotion, but in vain, and she burst into tears. Fortunately for her, the servant had no idea of the cause of her sorrow, and attributed it merely to the shock her mistress had received at the unexpected sight of a dead body, rendering her more nervous than usual.

Teresa now continued her road, and at length succeeded in reaching Zurich. Happy indeed was the meeting between parent and child. After the first effusion of joy was over, they had to receive many visitors, for all the principal Italian inhabitants of Zurich called on Rosetti to congratulate him on the arrival of his daughter. In the evening when they were by themselves, the Judge narrated to Teresa the success which had attended his efforts to

establish himself as an advocate in Zurich, and the different adventures he had met with since reaching that city.

“But I have another adventure,” he continued, “to tell you of. One Sunday about a fortnight since, on entering the temple, who do you think I saw?”

Teresa said it would be impossible for her to guess. Fortunately at the time the shades of evening were fast advancing, and no light had yet been brought into the room, or the Judge would have perceived an extraordinary pallor, combined with an expression of anxiety, spread over his daughter's features.

“You cannot guess?” her father continued.

“No,” Teresa faintly muttered.

“Camille Gurdon,” said Rosetti; and he then narrated the conversation which had taken place between them after the service was over.

Presently Rosetti asked his daughter

some question respecting the time she had seen Camille in Ferrara, but he received no answer. Surprised at her silence, he rose from his chair, and went towards her, and when near enough to distinguish her features, found she had fainted. In a state of intense terror he called for her maid, and together they managed to carry Teresa to her room. A physician was then sent for, but when he arrived she had recovered from her fainting fit. On Rosetti asking the physician (an Italian Protestant refugee) to what he attributed Teresa's illness, he replied, that he considered it merely occasioned by the fatigues of the journey she had undergone, and he had no doubt she would recover from it the next morning. In this he was correct, for the following day Teresa not only appeared well, but had so far recovered her self-possession as to address her father on the subject of Camille Gurdon.

“My dear father,” she said to him, “you

as well as I have been terribly mistaken in the character of Camille Gurdon. Before I left Ferrara, he was known as a spy of the Inquisition, and it was through him that both you and myself were denounced. It is impossible for me to think of him without feeling grieved, and somewhat degraded, at the remembrance of the dupes we were both made by him. Promise me, dear father, you will not speak of him again."

Rosetti readily made the promise required by his daughter, and the name of Camille Gurdon was never again mentioned by either.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUSION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the incapacity of Oriz to continue the direction of the Holy Office, it prosecuted its labours in extirpating Protestantism with undiminished vigour. In this they were greatly assisted by the recantation of Renée, modified as it was, for since her retirement to Belriguardo she had taken no active part in protecting the members of the Reformed creed during the persecutions which were now falling on them with such terrible severity. Renée had hitherto been considered, not only in the Duchy of Ferrara, but throughout the whole of the north of Italy, as the champion

and protectress of the Reformers. No longer encouraged by her patronage, they soon became disorganized and demoralized. They had no leader, and their worship, either public or private, was proclaimed penal, and those who were detected in assembling together for the purpose of prayer, were punished with great cruelty. For some time they attempted to continue the practice of *family* worship, but this was soon prevented. It has already been remarked that during the visit of Pope Paul to Ferrara, he secretly established in that city the Inquisition. For some years so cautiously and craftily did the Inquisitors carry on their duties, that their presence was unknown to the general mass of the population. Two years after their establishment in the city, they issued their first edict, which was one of singular mildness. It merely stated that all persons found walking, or conversing, in the churches during Divine service, should be punished.

During their residence in Ferrara, however, the Inquisitors had succeeded in establishing in that city and in Modena a system of espionage, which perhaps, for atrocity, had never been surpassed in the world. None were exempt from its action. Every dwelling, no matter whether the palace of the noble, or the hovel of the meanest labourer, in which any inmate was imagined to be Protestant, or even to favour the Reformed religion, had, through the agency of spies, a perfect continuity established between it and the Holy Office. Not unfrequently these spies were to be found among members of the family itself, especially the younger ones. These, when their faith had been tampered with, were taught to believe that to bring under the notice of the Inquisitors the heretical opinions of the others was not only a duty acceptable to God, but a means of saving the souls of those dear to them. They were even taught to hold that the more

closely allied to them was the person they denounced, not only testified the greater love for their relative, but was the more acceptable in the eyes of the Almighty. Again, it was no unusual occurrence for the member of a Protestant family who had again joined the Church of Rome, to receive permission to conceal for a time his recantation, and to join in the Reformed family worship, so as to be better able to give more certain information of the spread of the Reformed doctrines among his relatives and their associates.

But although the system of espionage was carried out on both rich and poor alike, with the latter, and the uneducated classes in general, far less trouble was taken than with the rich and educated. This arose from two principal causes. In the first place, the Inquisitors knew that when they required it they could more easily obtain information against the working man's family than the rich, as from their

ignorance those members who had quitted the Reformed creed were more easily acted on by the sophistry of the Inquisitors and their agents than was likely in the more educated classes. Again, the Inquisitors rightly calculated that, as the ignorant classes were always greatly influenced by example, if Protestantism could be extirpated among the educated, and those who professed it could be induced either by persuasion, fear of punishment in their own persons, or by obtaining the remission of a cruel sentence against some loved relative by inducing them to recant, the populace would not long hold out. And the results which followed certainly justified the conclusions they had arrived at. On one point alone was the Inquisition in Ferrara less atrocious than that of Spain, for severe as the prosecution against heretics undoubtedly was, the sentence of death was less frequently pronounced. Even when compared with many of the cities of Italy

the punishment of death in Ferrara was far less frequently inflicted.

Some idea of the cruelties perpetrated in other cities by the Inquisition may be formed from the fact mentioned by Agazzari the historian of Parma, himself a Roman Catholic. "In this year, 1413," he says, "there were captured in that city a multitude of heretics, and many of them, including *twenty-five women*, were burnt by order of the Inquisitors." How far the credit of the superior clemency exhibited in Ferrara, so far as the punishment of death is concerned was due to the Inquisitors, it would be a difficult matter to determine. Possibly after all it arose from the temper of the people and the Judges themselves. As far as the application of the torture was concerned and minor punishments, the Holy Office appears to have acted independently of the civil law but in cases where capital punishment was likely to be pronounced, the prisoner was handed over to the secular power,

and the humanity of the Ferrarese judges avoided as much as possible the punishment of death.

But if capital punishment was more rarely inflicted during the reign of the Inquisition in Ferrara than in other cities, the minor punishments were often terribly severe. The torture and floggings were both frequently repeated in the same individual, and confiscations were carried out with great severity. As before stated, another punishment also was inflicted upon heretics with a frequency which, in the humanitarian principles of the present day, almost makes us shudder in relating it—the nailing of the tongue of the heretic, or blasphemer of the saints, as they were frequently called, to a log of wood, in which position they were kept for two hours. In the account-books of the municipality of Ferrara, frequent entries are made for expenses attending this punishment. Cittadella, himself a Catholic, in his *Notizie Relative a Ferrara*,

quotes many entries of this description, as well as small sums paid for the purchase of cord to tie the hands of the sufferers, and iron fetters for the feet to keep them from moving.

During the persecution of Renée's time, a singular code was drawn up, the scale of punishment increasing in severity in proportion as the saint calumniated, or even spoken of disrespectfully, stood higher in rank. For a contemptuous, or what was considered an irreverent expression made use of against one of the minor saints, a severe flogging was generally administered in the first instance, and on a repetition of the offence the prisoner suffered the punishment of nailing the tongue to a block of wood. Expressions even of disrespect against the Virgin were punished by a severe flogging, as well as the amputation of the tongue for the first offence, and death for the second. Irreverent expressions against the mass, pilgrimages, and

other Roman Catholic ceremonies, were punished with equal severity. One of the most remarkable features in the administration of the law against heretics was that the punishment increased in severity as the position in life of the accused was the higher, or his education the better. For an irreverent expression made use of in connexion with a saint, an ignorant or working man would receive only a flogging, while a person in a more elevated position in society, for a similar offence, would frequently be punished by the nailing of the tongue and confiscation of goods. The most terrible punishments were those inflicted on persons who again relapsed into Protestantism—who, possibly under the influence of the torture, had joined the Church of Rome. The mildest punishment inflicted on these (and none were ever pardoned) was the amputation of the tongue, accompanied by scourgings, the more severe in proportion with the educa-

tion and elevated position in society of the culprit.

Large rewards were also given to all who would bring to the Inquisitors heretical books, no matter in what manner they obtained them, whether by fraud, violence, or sheer robbery. All heretical books placed in the hands of the Inquisitors were immediately burned, and the punishment of death threatened on those who imported fresh ones into the Duchy. All parents were obliged, under the penalty of confiscation of their goods, to send their children to Roman Catholic schools, so that the rising generation might be educated to hold Protestantism in abhorrence ; while great latitude was (justifiably enough) allowed to the Jew and the Mohammedan.

It may easily be imagined that under such a system of oppression it would have been impossible, without the interposition of a miracle, for Protestantism to hold its

ground. It gradually dwindled during the life of Alfonso II. At his death his son, Ercole II., offered his mother, the Duchess Renée, her choice — either to abjure Protestantism (for it was well known she had again become a member of the Reformed creed, though out of respect for her husband during his life she had refrained from openly professing it) or be banished from the Duchy, and her magnificent palace of Belriguardo and other possessions in Italy confiscated. Of the two propositions offered her by her unnatural son, Renée, without hesitation, chose the latter, and returned to France, where she resided during the remainder of her life, always a staunch friend and protectress of the persecuted Protestants. Shortly after she quitted Ferrara the last spark of Protestantism in the Duchy was stamped out under the heel of the Inquisitor.

THE END.

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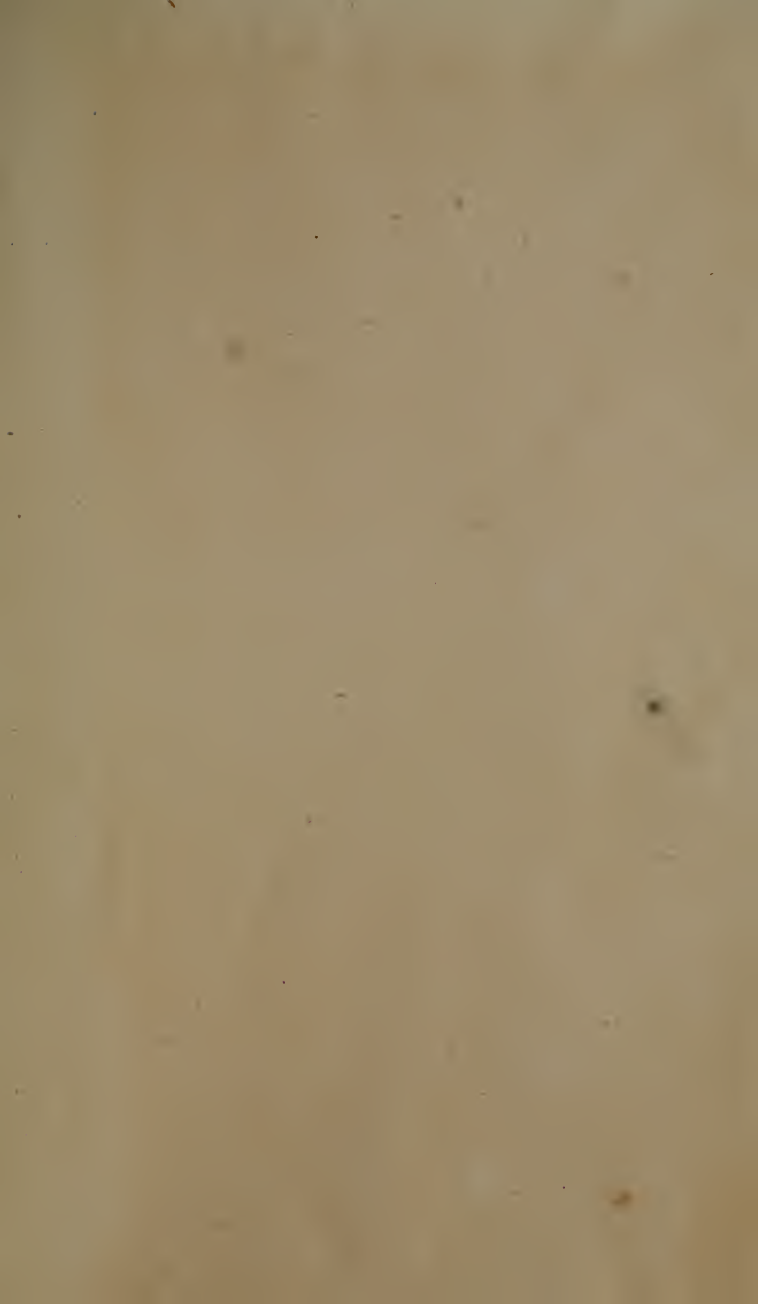
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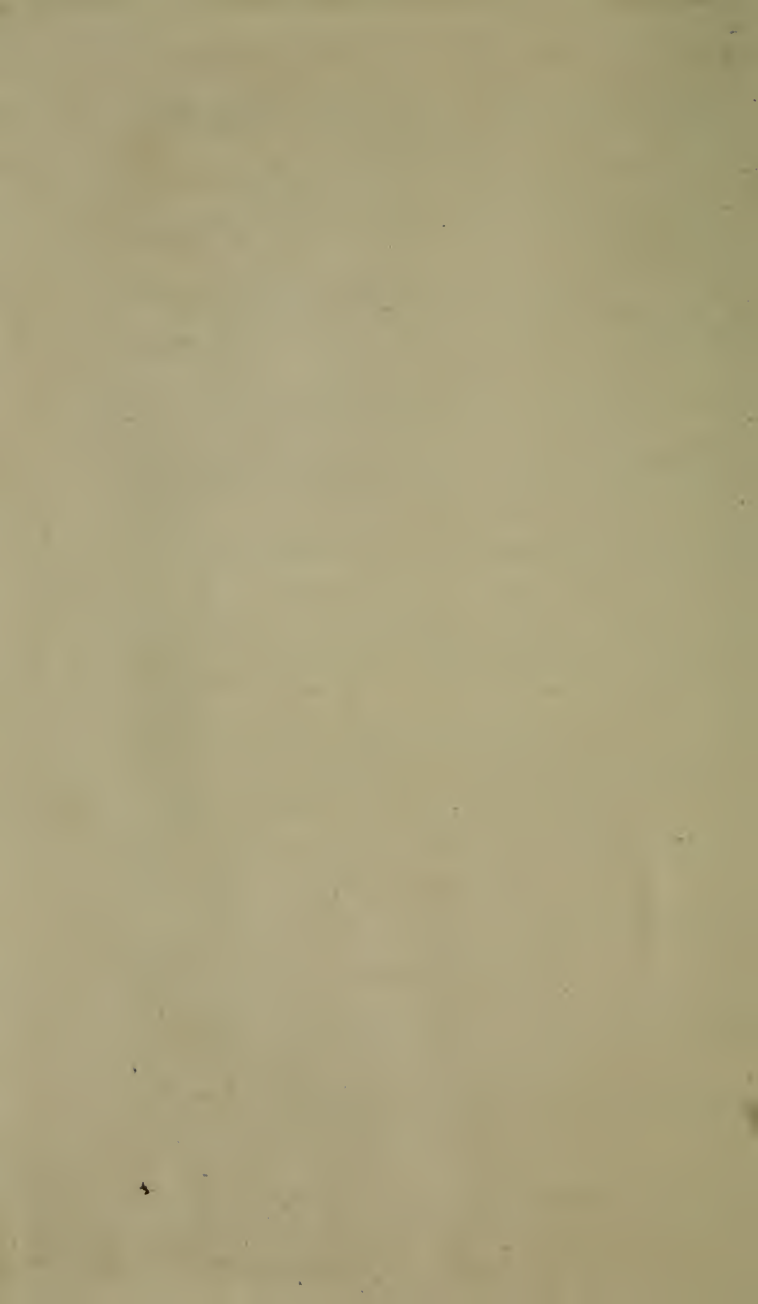
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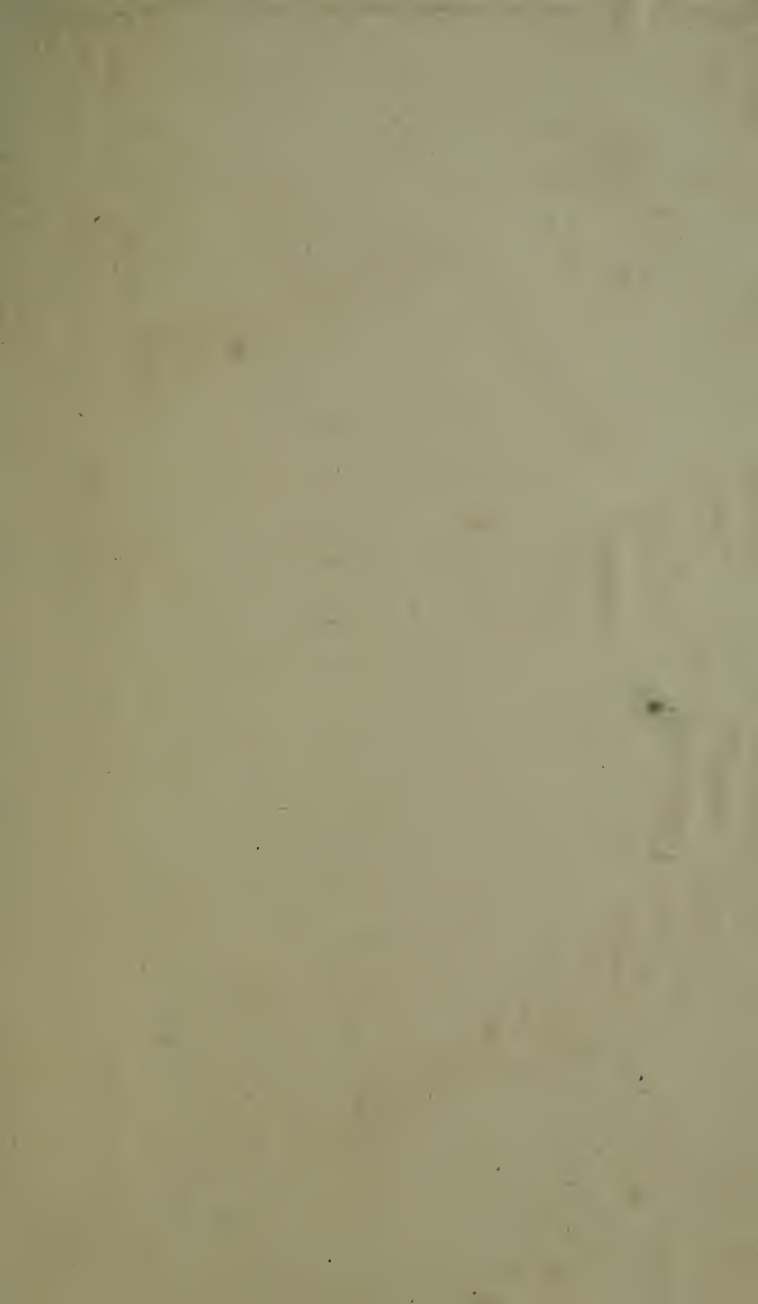
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